FIRST MAY ISSUE, 1921
VOL. XXIX No. 3

ADVENTURE

25 Cents

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PUBLISHED
TWICE A MONTH

Adventure

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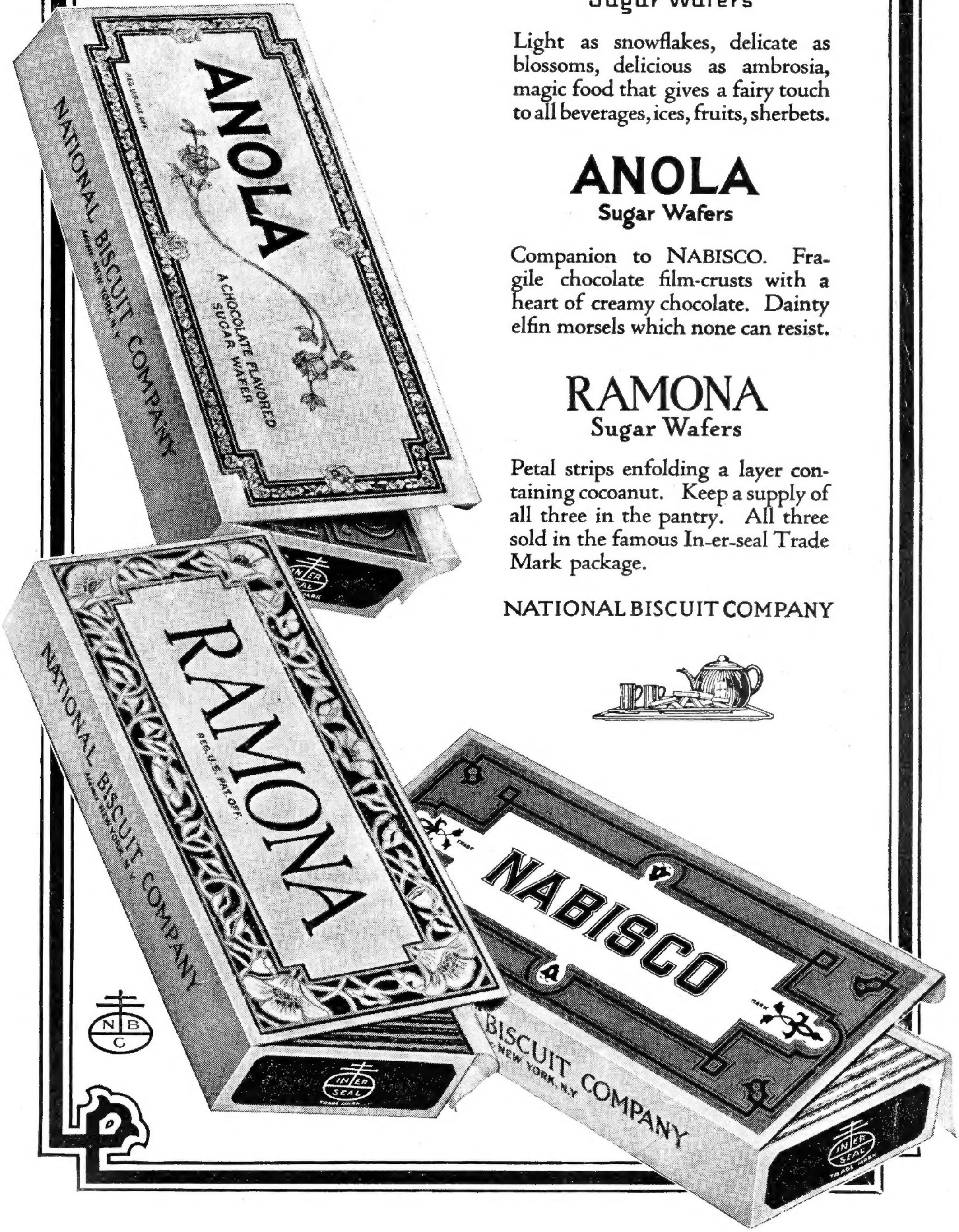

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"Keep Your Eye on Jim!"

"It's not alone what a man does *during* working hours, but *outside* of working hours—that determines his future. There are plenty of men who do a good job while they're at it, but who work with one eye on the clock and one ear cocked for the whistle. They long for that loaf at noon and for the evening hour in the bowling alley. They are good workers and they'll always be just that—ten years from now they are likely to be right where they are today.

"But when you see a man putting in his noon hour learning more about his work, you see a man who won't stay down. His job today is just a stepping-stone to something better. He'll never be satisfied until he hits the top. And he'll get there, because he's the kind of man we want in this firm's responsible positions. You can always depend on a man like Jim.

"Every important man in this plant won out in the same way. Our treasurer used to be a bookkeeper. The Sales manager started in a branch office up state. The factory superintendent was at a lathe a few years ago. The chief designer rose from the bottom in the drafting room. The traffic manager was a clerk.

"All these men won their advancements through spare time study with the International Correspondence Schools. Today they are earning four or five times—yes, some of them *ten* times as much money as when they came with us.

"That's why I say that Jim there is one of our future executives. Keep your eye on him. Give him every chance—he'll make good!

Employers everywhere are looking for men who really want to get ahead. If *you* want to make more money, show your employer that you are trying to be *worth* more money. If you want more responsibility, show him you're willing to *prepare* yourself for it.

For 29 years the International Correspondence Schools have been training men and women right in their own homes after supper, or whenever they had a little time to spare. More than two million have stepped up in just this way. More than 130,000 are studying now. Ten thousand are starting every month.

Can you afford to let another priceless hour pass without making *your* start toward something better? Here is all we ask—without cost, without obligation, mark and mail this coupon. It's a little thing that takes but a moment it's the most important thing you can do t Do it now!

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Explain, without obligating me, how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, *before* which I mark X.

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☐ Electric Lighting and Railways
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☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ MINE FOREMAN OR ENGINEER
☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER
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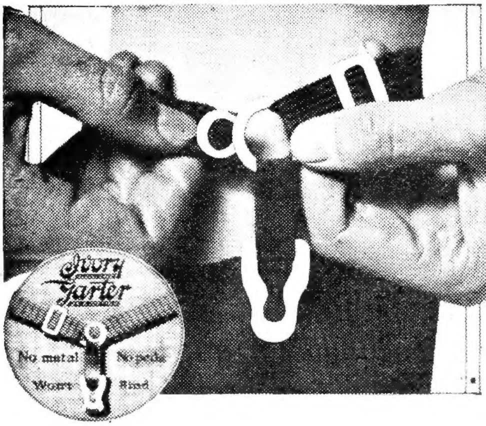
Canadians may send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada

ADVENTURE
May 3rd, 1921

Published twice a month by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. Yearly subscription $4.00 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Oct. 1, 1910, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Volume 29
Number 3



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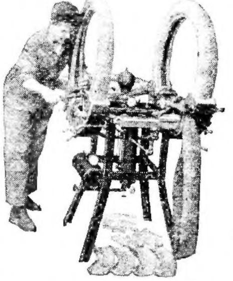

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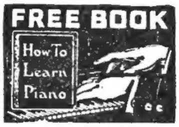

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How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

The Amazing Experience of Victor Jones

"Of course I place you! Mr. Addison Sims, of Seattle.

"If I remember correctly—and I do remember correctly—Mr. Burroughs, the lumberman, introduced me to you at the luncheon of the Seattle Rotary Club three years ago in May. This is a pleasure indeed! I haven't laid eyes on you since that day. How is the grain business? And how did that amalgamation work out?"

The assurance of the speaker—in the crowded corridor of the Hotel McAlpin—compelled me to turn and look at him, though I must say it is not my usual habit to "listen in" even in a hotel lobby.

"He is David M. Roth, the most famous memory expert in the United States," said my friend Kennedy, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that, before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toastmaster was introducing a long line of guests to Mr. Roth. I got in line and when it came my turn, Mr. Roth asked, "What are your initials, Mr. Jones, and your business connection and telephone number?" Why he asked this I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd of 60 men he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What is more, he named each man's business and telephone number, for good measure.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, bank clearings, prices, lot numbers, parcel post rates and anything else the guests had given him in rapid order.

* * * * *

When I met Mr. Roth again—which you may be sure I did the first chance I got—he rather bowled me over by saying, in his quiet modest way:

"There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts or something I have read in a magazine.

"You can do this just as easily as I do. Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things which seem so miraculous when I do them.

"My own memory," continued Mr. Roth, "was originally very faulty. Yes it was—a really **poor** memory. On meeting a man I would lose his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably 10,000 men and women in the United States, many of whom I have met but once, whose names I can tell instantly on meeting them."

"That is all right for you, Mr. Roth," I interrupted. "You have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Jones," he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first seven simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system and you will find it—not hard work as you might fear—but just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to prove it. His Course did; I got it the very next day from his publishers, the Independent Corporation.

When I tackled the first lesson, I suppose I was the most surprised man in forty-eight states to find that I had learned—in about one hour—how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That first lesson **stuck.** And so did the other six.

Read this letter from Terence J. McManus, of the firm of Olcott, Bonynge, McManus & Ernst, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, 170 Broadway, and one of the most famous trial lawyers in New York:

> "May I take occasion to state that I regard your service in giving this system to the world as a public benefaction. The wonderful simplicity of the method, and the ease with which its principles may be acquired, especially appeal to me. I may add that I already had occasion to test the effectiveness of the first two lessons in the preparation for trial of an important action in which I am about to engage."

Mr. McManus didn't put it a bit too strong. The Roth Course is priceless! I can absolutely **count** on my memory now. I can tell the name of most any man I have met before—and I am getting better all the time. I can remember any figure I wish to remember. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly, once I have filed them by Mr. Roth's easy method. Street addresses are just as easy.

The old fear of forgetting (you know what that is) has vanished. I used to be "scared stiff" on my feet because I wasn't **sure.** I couldn't remember what I wanted to say.

Now I am sure of myself, and confident and "easy as an old shoe" when I get on my feet at the club, or at a banquet, or in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of it all is that I have become a good conversationalist—and I used to be as silent as a sphinx when I got into a crowd of people who knew things.

Now I can call up like a flash of lightning most any fact I want right at the instant I need it most. I used to think a "hair trigger" memory belonged only to the prodigy and genius. Now I see that every man of us has that kind of a memory if he only knows how to make it work right.

I tell you it is a wonderful thing, after groping around in the dark for so many years to be able to switch the big searchlight on your mind and see instantly everything you want to remember.

This Roth Course **will do wonders in** your office.

Since we took it up you never hear anyone in **our** office say "I guess" **or** "I think it was about so much" **or** "I forget that right now" or "I can't remember" or "I must look up his name." Now they are right there with the answer—like a shot.

Have you ever heard of "Multigraph" Smith? Real name H. Q. Smith, of John E. Price & Co., Seattle, Wash. Here is just a bit from a letter of his that I saw last week.

> "Here is the whole thing in a nutshell: Mr. Roth has a most remarkable Memory Course. It is simple, and easy as falling off a log. Yet with one hour a day of practice anyone—I don't care who he is—can improve his Memory 100% in a week and 1,000% in six months."

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Send to Independent Corporation for Mr. Roth's amazing course and see what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in **increased earning power** will be enormous.

VICTOR JONES.

Send No Money

So confident is the Independent Corporation, the publishers of the Roth Memory Course, that once you have an opportunity to see in your own home how easy it is to double, yes, triple your memory power in a few short hours, that they are willing to send the course on free examination.

Don't send any money. Merely mail the coupon or write a letter and the complete course will be sent, all charges prepaid, at once. If you are not entirely satisfied send it back any time within five days after you receive it and you will owe nothing.

On the other hand, if you are as pleased as are the thousands of other men and women who have used the course, send only $5 in full payment. You take no risk and you have everything to gain, so mail the coupon now before this remarkable offer is withdrawn. **Independent Corporation, Dept. R-475, 319 Sixth Ave., New York.**

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You may send me the Course or Courses checked below. Within five days after receipt I will either remail them or send you $5 for each in full payment.

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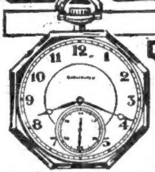

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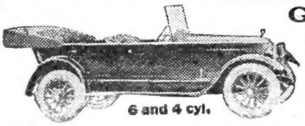

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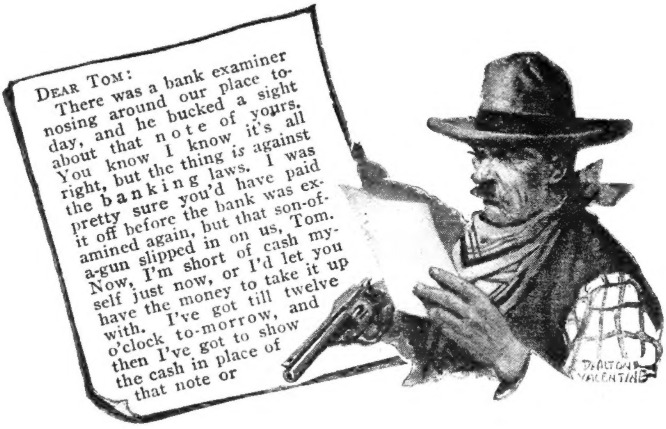

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There was a bank examiner nosing around our place today, and he bucked a sight about that note of yours. You know I know it's all right, but the thing is against the banking laws. I was pretty sure you'd have paid it off before the bank was examined again, but that son-of-a-gun slipped in on us, Tom. Now, I'm short of cash myself just now, or I'd let you have the money to take it up with. I've got till twelve o'clock to-morrow, and then I've got to show the cash in place of that note or

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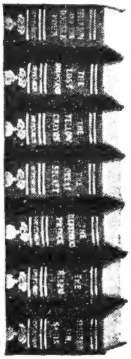

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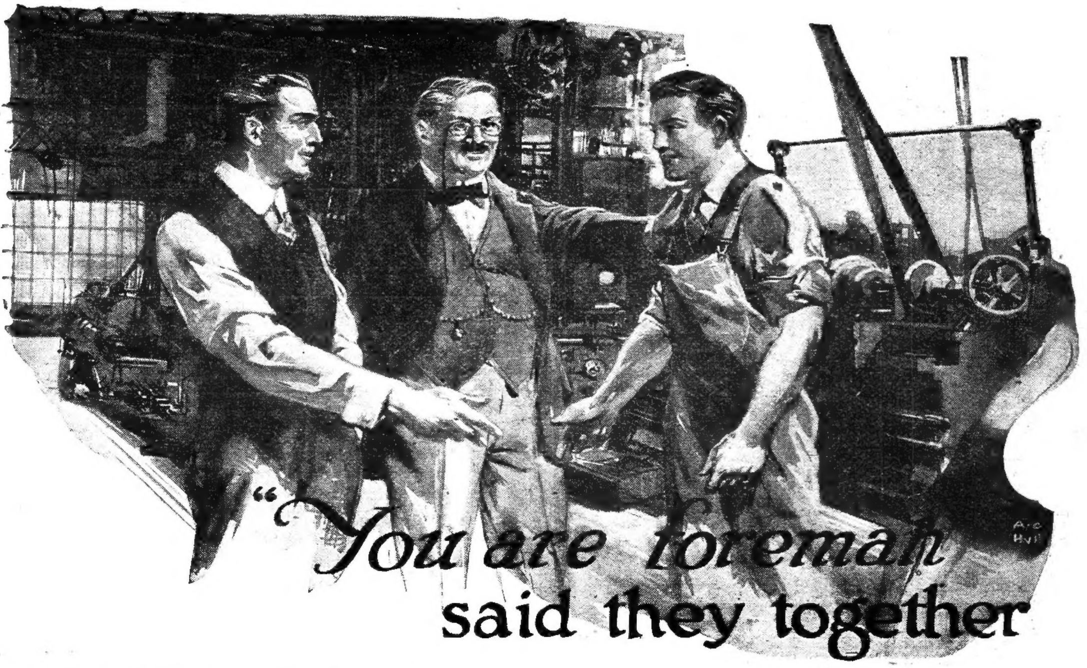

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, in its issue of October 9, tells the story. He was a retiring fellow—rarely ever asserted himself. Didn't have much to say. He blushed whenever a girl spoke to him.

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Adventure

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MAY 3rd 1921
Vol xxix No 3

Published Twice a Month by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

J. H. GANNON, President
C. H. HOLMES, Secretary and Treasurer

Spring and Macdougal Streets - - New York City
6, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 1, 1910, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, Editor

Yearly Subscription, $4.00 in Advance
Single Copy, Twenty-Five Cents

Foreign Postage, $2.00 additional. Canadian Postage, 60 cents.

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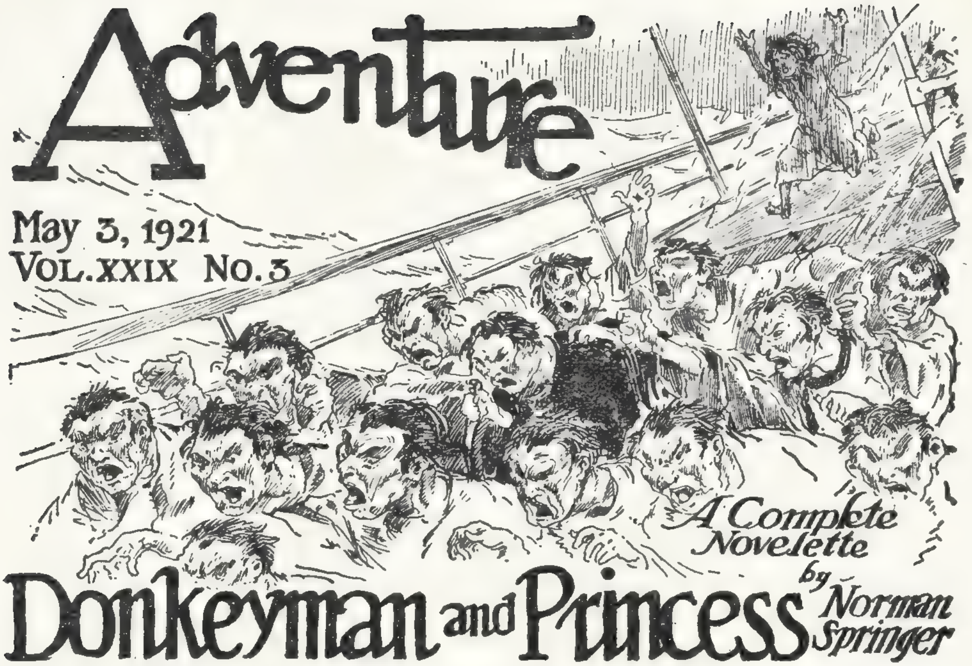
DESERT crooks and city crooks alike are out to rob old *Pete* and his young partner of their bonanza, and in defense of their rights the two prospectors have to shake dice with Fate again and again. "A POT OF GOLD," a novelette of the Western bad-lands, by E. S. Pladwell, complete in the next issue.

TO THE haunted people of Bhir comes a champion to wage war for them against the unknown. *Malcolm*, the Scotchman, does not believe in ghosts, but he finds some things that he can not explain—at first. "THE VILLAGE OF THE GHOST," a complete novelette by Harold Lamb, is about India a hundred years ago; it will appear in our next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.



Adventure

May 3, 1921
Vol. XXIX No. 3

A Complete Novelette

Donkeyman and Princess

by Norman Springer

Author of "The Luck of Hardluck Karluk," "Flat Behind The Ears," etc.

DO YOU want to know how a hard-boiled, ocean-goin' wagabond like me ever come to be starting up ashore in a tidy business? Well, it was this way.

Her christened name was the *Sea Witch*, but when sailormen called her they traded the "*W*" for a letter close up to the head o' the alphabet. It described her better. She was a dirty, hungry, lime-juice tramp, out o' Cardiff, and with an Old Man named Chitpole. When I shipped in her as donkeyman, in Shanghai, I says to myself—

"Billy Murray, you'll be sorry you done this!"

I signed on before a shipping-master, never having seen the craft; but the very moment I followed my dunnage over her rail, just before sailin'-time, I seen misery ahead. She had a coolie crew. There was about fifty o' them, deck gang and black gang both, and they was about the measliest lot, yellow or white, I ever clapped eyes upon. Sweepin's o' the Canton slums. I never yet heard o' a ship that made a lucky passage with a coolie crew.

Sure enough, the bad luck started before ever we got clear o' port. The Swede carpenter—who was the only white man for'ard except myself—was getting the hatches closed for sea, when one o' these yelllow beauties took it into his head to slack away a boom-guy that Chips was holdin' to. Chips fell into the hold. He fell only about eight feet, but it busted both his legs, and he went back ashore in the pilot boat.

This bad luck was the ship's. It didn't affect me very much, except that it give me a room all to myself, and I don't suppose the squarehead would have been good company, anyway. But some days later we had another bit o' bad luck that did matter.

We was bound for Vladivostock, with rice and machine guns for Kolchak's army. Runnin' up the Japan sea, we got a touch o' weather. It come on to blow a bit, and a nasty head sea got up in which the old hooker just wallowed. She was the wettest old box I was ever in. The well decks were chock-a-block with green water all the time. One of the black gang Chinks was dumping ashes, and he got adrift in the flood between the bridge deck and the poop; and when the fourth engineer tried to salvage him, a big sea come lolloping

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over the rail and carried both of them off to leeward.

Well, so far I had been having a soft time. Just puttering around the deck winches and donkey boiler, and sleeping in all night. I figured if I did go hungry this voyage, I'd at least have lots o' sleep.

But when the fourth was lost, the chief had to take his watch. The chief was a big, fat man, named Mister MacWimble, and he liked his ease. What did he do but call me down below and break me in on throttle watch, and tell me I'm to be acting fourth engineer until a new man was shipped. I was willing enough. She was just a common, under-engined old scow, with a triple-expansion, single-screw grinder and two Scotch boilers in her. I could handle the job without trouble, and the change allowed me to move amidships into the fourth's room and eat the better grub at the engineer's mess.

A baby could have run that watch if white men had been making the steam. But with Chinks in the stokehold it was a little harder. They had to be kept stirred up all the time or the ship would stop. There were eight o' them on the fire, making hard work of what two white men could do easy, and the ninth Chink, the boss of the watch, was with me in the engine-room, oiling, and passing on my orders.

There were three o' these boss Chinks in the black gang, one for each watch; and another one worked on deck as bosun. This last was called "Chief Chink," and the others was known as "Number One" or "Two" or "Three," according to their watches. These boss Chinks could savvy a little English, and when you wanted anything done you told one o' them, and he told his gang.

I had Number Three in my watch. He was a dried-up little yellow bag o' bones with a name that sounded like a sneeze. So I called him Jim, and got on pretty good with him. I guess he knew all of a dozen words of English, mostly cuss words at that, and he used them all every time a feller spoke to him.

He kept his crowd working, and got the steam out o' them, until we was a day out from Vladivostock. Then he got took sudden with bad chest pains and couldn't catch his breath. So he laid up and croaked in the gravy-eye watch, in spite o' all the calomel Captain Chitpole fed him; and we dropped him over the side while we were standing by for the pilot.

From then on I had to get the steam out o' my watch with the business end of a spanner. I missed Jim, because I hated to knock the poor devils about, they being such a miserable lot.

Well, things being like they were in this old coffin, I says to myself—

"Billy Murray, you'll jump her in Vladivostock!"

I figured on getting an American ship for Frisco or Seattle, even if I had to stowaway, I was that fed up with lime-juice grub and the smell o' them coolies.

BUT when we got inside we found everything up in the air, so to speak. An army feller came on board with the pilot and told our Old Man there wasn't a chance we'd discharge our cargo because Kolchak had been licked and couldn't use our rice and machine guns. So we lay with steam up, ready to get under way on short notice, while the skipper went ashore to find out what to do. A Jap gunboat, anchored near by, sent a squad of marines on board to protect us against any gay bolos who might feel like coming off from shore and taking charge.

I figured out afterward that it was these same Japs that brought the trouble to us. They was almost as measly a lot as our own coolies, and they all seemed to have colds, and went sneezing and barking all over the ship.

Afterwhile the captain came back, and he told the mate that we was ordered to sail immediately, cargo and all, for San Francisco, from where the ship was already chartered for the United Kingdom. And he also said that the city was filled with up-country refugees who were offering the shirts off their backs for a passage out o' the country, and we would sail in the morning, after we had taken some passengers on board. After which he set the Chink bosun to work moving all his gear out of his room and into the chart-house.

He also had a talk with Mister MacWimble, and what does that feller do but move his duffel into the second engineer's room, and that deucer, name o' Leach, moved into the third's room, and this last, a feller named Mister Lindsay o' Glasgow, doubled up with me, which I didn't like very much, on account of his having something wrong with his feet which made me keep the door and port open all the time.

But I was tickled to hear we were going to San Francisco, and I says to myself—

"Billy Murray, you'd be a fool to jump her now!"

I figured I could stand another month or so if it would land me in a port in a white man's country. Also, I was as interested as a born rubberneck when I learned about our passengers. I heard the Old Man talking to the chief.

"Mister MacWimble, we are going to be honored and paid —— well, too," says the skipper. "We're going to carry a flower o' the old Russian haristocracy to the States, on 'er way to gay Paree. She's a refugee," says he, "and she's running away with the family jewels from the murdering bolos. 'Er name," he says, "is the Princess Stepanover Sherbakoff, and until just lately she chummed around with the Czar and his lot. She's a very beautiful gel," says he, "and she's coming on board in the morning, and take my room, it being the best. Your room, Mister MacWimble, will be occupied by a famous Russian general—though, not, I understand, the fighting kind—named General Michael Smirnoff, who is 'imself a prince after the Russian manner, and who travels in the princess' soot to look after her. You'll be agreeable, I know, for there's thirty quid in it for you."

WELL, I'm a good American, and from Boston, and was raised a good Democrat, and I ain't never had much use for the king stuff. But I'll admit I've always had a sneaking sort o' liking for princesses. My old granny used to tell me about them of an evening, when I was a kid. But up to this time, the only ones I'd ever clapped eyes upon in real life was an old dame of ninety or thereabouts I seen in Hamburg before the war, and a fancy piece in a vaudeville house who called herself Dally-Patti of Persia, and was a fake by the style o' her.

But this Princess Stepanover seemed to be the real goods in the princess line. She sounded good to me. I ain't no college graduate, but I ain't no bum either, and I'd read in plenty of books and magazines about these princesses of Europe being always fed up with and sick o' the dudes they have to live among, and how they're always ready to fall for the first handsome American workin' stiff they see. So I honed up my razor, and wished that fourth hadn't gone and got himself drowned in the only uniform he owned.

"Billy Murray," says I to myself, "it's first impressions that count. You slick up and be sticking around when the dame comes over the side. When she lamps you, the poor girl won't feel so bad about the rest o' the things she'll see on this packet."

But as it happened, she come on board that very night, under cover o' darkness. She was clearing out ahead of her schedule. The first I knew of it was when the Chink mess-boy roused me out of my bunk at four bells in the middle watch and told me I was wanted below because the ship was getting under way.

When I got on deck, I found the ship had already broken ground.

"It would be just like old Chitpole to take the passage money and skip without the passengers," says I to myself.

I was real sore about it, and I took a turn for'ard before I went below. I seen the Old Man standing by the chart-house, talking to a big feller in a fur overcoat, who, I thought, was the pilot. I was that mad I forgot my manners and sung out—

"Hey, there, Captain Chitpole, how about your passengers?"

Both of them jumped, and turned around and looked down at me. I saw that the big guy in the overcoat was a Russian by the cut o' his jib. He was black whiskers from his eyebrows to his middle. Both of them seemed considerable startled by my question.

"Is that you, donkeyman?" says Captain Chitpole. "Well, blast your impudence, you Yankee gutter-swab!" says he, only a bit more forceful. "What are you doing up here," says he, "poking your hugly 'ead into what's none o' your ruddy business? Confound your insolence," says he. "Will you get below where you belong, or will I boot ye down?" Then he says to the whiskered gent, "I'm thinking, general, as 'ow we'll have to hintroduce that old Russian custom o' flogging on board our ships in order to teach these blasted Yankee hupstarts their places!"

So having found out what I wanted, I went below. The chief was in the engine-room, and he told me that the princess and her maid had taken up quarters in the Old Man's room. The chief was sort of bitter about it all. He'd taken a bad cold, and he swore it was on account o' his being turned out of his own room to accommodate the general.

"Thirty quid is all verra well for room rent," he says, "but if I've caught my death o' cold by reason o' the change, ye'll ken the thirty quid is dead loss. Why couldn't the mon have come aboord like a Christian in the sunlight," says he, "instead o' sneaking over the rail in the middle watch, and turning me out into the perishin' cold wi' naught to cover my weight and my years save my shift? I verra much fear 'tis my death I've caught," says he.

I took a squint at his eyes, all streaming water, and felt of his wrist.

"There's many a true word spoke in jest," I told him. "You're a pretty sick man, Mister MacWimble, and if you'll take my advice you'll go up to your bunk and turn in under all the blankets you can find. I'll bet my pay-day you've got the Spanish flu," says I.

"For a donkeyman you're very free wi' advice," he says. "Ye are a beast o' ill-omen not to know a simple cold when you hear one. Will ye keep your advice to yourself, ye red-headed son-of-a-you-know-what," he says, "and hop out into the stokehold and advise them coolies to exercise a wee bit on the coal-pile!"

Seeing that the man was in no condition to listen to reason, I did go out into the stokehold. What did I find out there but one of the Chinks of the watch stretched out upon the coal in the bunker, as loony as could be, and singing of home and mother in his own lingo. He had a graveyard cough, and I gathered from the rest o' the crowd he had been complaining of back pains before he was took bad.

Well, it was the flu. Any man who had seen the flu could have told that with half an eye. That's what MacWimble and the rest o' the fat-heads who officered the *Sea Witch* couldn't understand—that I wasn't talking to hear my own voice, but because I had something to tell them. Didn't I have it myself in Bordeaux in 1918? And didn't I see it all along the Atlantic coast after the Armistice?

But these fellers on the *Sea Witch* had been bossing coolies for so long they was all drunk with themselves. They couldn't listen to anything that come from below. They didn't know the flu from a cold in the head, and they was too haughty to take any tip from a poor donkeyman who was a blasted Yank to boot. Why, when I hot-footed it back into the engine-room and told the chief about the sick Chink he just cursed me up one side and down the other for a meddler—and him so sick himself he had to hold on to the log-desk to keep from falling while he swore.

" 'Tis a plain case o' malingering," says he. "Ye'll ken this, Mister Donkeyman, ye'll get the steam out o' yon loafers or ye'll strip the jumper from your back and bend over a scoop-shovel yourself!"

With that he stumbled up the ladder and left me in charge. When the second came down to relieve me at eight bells he said that the chief was in his bunk and seemed pretty sick. As for the poor Chink, I had to have him hoisted to the deck in an ash-bucket and the deck coolies carried him for'ard head and heels.

II

WHEN I turned out again at breakfast-time I could hear MacWimble wheezing like he had asthma, although the second's room, which he was in, was two bulkheads for'ard of me. While I was dressing, the mess-boy come in to slick up the room, but I couldn't get any news except "no *sabe*" out of him. So, before I went to breakfast, I went to MacWimble's room.

The door was closed, but seeing the case was so important I made no bones about going in. I found the port was closed, too, and the frowst of the room thick enough to slice with a knife. The chief was lying in his bunk, panting for breath, and clear off his head; and Captain Chitpole, and Mister Thompson, the mate, were standing by his side looking down at him with surprized looks on their faces.

Well, I took one look at MacWimble, and saw he was a goner. I wasn't surprized at the state he was in. I'd noticed in France that it was the fat ones that went quick, and the chief was a whale of a man. In fact, that was the big danger on the *Sea Witch;* every one o' her 'midship crowd ran to flesh—except me, who was skinny but tough, and not an officer, properly speaking—and taking them full and by I'll say they was the fattest crowd o' heads I ever sailed with. Mister MacWimble was the fattest o' the lot, and the first to keel over.

The skipper looked at me hard and cross, and opened his mouth to say something. But before he could swear I launched into my say, hoping against hope the old fool would be in a humor to listen to reason.

"Look here, Captain Chitpole, I'm just a donkeyman on this vessel, according to articles," says I, "though maybe my doing the work of a ticketed man gives me the right to speak my mind. Anyway, I'm doing it, and for your own good.

"I seem to be the only man on board," I says, "who knows what is wrong. That feller," says I, pointing to the bunk, "come down last night with the Spanish flu. He wouldn't take my advice, and now, as you can see for yourself, the bugs have got into his airpump, and he's a goner. Your physic won't do him no good, captain.

"And I want to tell you also, sir," I says, "that one o' the Chinks was took with it last night, as well as the chief—not to mention Mister Thompson, there, blowing his nose every five seconds. It's the Spanish influenzer, and there's nothing to do, captain," says I, "but take my advice and turn back to port, or else put in to Hakodate. Because this crowd on board, never having been exposed, will all take it, and if you don't take my advice, we'll be a plague ship in less than a week. And you can take my word for it, and I'm tellin' you all this with due respect," says I.

But it wasn't no use. Those fellers wouldn't listen to a donkeyman. The mate just grunted and looked around for something to hit me with, while the Old Man took a breath and began to talk to me in a way I couldn't repeat in public now that all the saloons are closed.

"You're a blushin', blinkin', bloomin' pest," says he to me when he had calmed down a bit, "and I warn you once and for all, Mister Donkeyman, that if you come poking your blasted Yankee nose hinto your betters' business again on my ship, why, I'll log you for hinsubordination, and clap you in irons for mutinous conduct, s' 'elp me!" he says. "I don't like to 'it a man who is smaller than me," says he, "so, you miserable, coal-eatin' swab, will you please take your ugly mug out o' 'ere before I lose my temper. I'm a mild man," says he, "but you exasperate me. Now, —— your eyes, get out!"

Seeing as how he felt that way, I got out, and all I said to him as I went was:

"It ain't sporting, Captain Chitpole, to refer to size," says I, "and when you get taken down, and your pipes begin to sputter like leaky piston-rods, you'll be wishin' you was as skinny as me."

With that I shut the door quick so that MacWimble's boot, which the mate hove, didn't do no more than scratch the paintwork.

My watch below was the twelve to four, so after breakfast —which I had alone, for the second didn't turn out to eat—I took a turn on deck to look at the passengers, and, not seeing them, I went back to bed and snoozed till seven bells.

"The princess," says I to myself, "will be sleeping till noon and eating in bed, after the manner o' her kind. Not until evening will you see her."

At dinner I ate alone again. The Chink steward, who was a good guy and talked with a cockney accent, said as how the second was too sick to get up and eat, or stand watch either. Which I could well believe, after listenin' to Mister Leach cough through the bulkhead. But the steward said the Old Man had had a fine row with the second over his layin' up. Nothing but a cold, says the Old Man, and no feller should lay up because he had a cold.

"My heye, 'im velly mad; call 'im second —— loafer!" says the steward.

"How's the chief?" I asked him.

"Bad, bad. velly bad," says he. "Bad ship, bad captain, bad luck, oh, velly much —— come bimeby," says he.

I AGREED with him. Only I figured the —— had started already. Here was the two boss engineers laid up, and that meant that the third and me would have to stand watch and watch, and lose a bit o' sleep, if the ship was to be kept moving.

I didn't care much. I was beginning to feel sort o' reckless by this time.

"Billy Murray, you ain't paid to worry," I says to myself. "You look after your own skin, and let these fellers look after theirs themselves, since they're too proud to listen to good advice." That's the way I felt. "There's going to be misery and death falling all over this old wagon," says I to myself, "and you just stand from under."

Anyway, there wasn't any sense in my

worrying. For one thing, that steward was doing enough worrying for all hands. He was a sad-looking man by nature, and this noon his face was so long and sorrowful that one look at it was enough to set a religious man at his prayers. I thought he was scared o' the sickness, and I tried to put some heart into him.

"Maybe you won't catch it, steward," says I. "Though you do run somewhat to a waistline, and the fat ones are pretty certain to be taken down—and off. But cheer up," I says. "We all got to bump off some time—why not now?"

He began to chatter away at a great rate in Chino lingo, and he shook his fist at the for'ard bulkhead. Then he calmed down, and started to talk in the pidgin he'd picked up around the London docks.

"Hit's all that blarsted Judy," says he. "She bling bad luck to this ship."

"Are you talking about the beautiful Russian princess who is bunked down in the Old Man's room?" I asked him, not liking his manner o' speaking about the lady very well.

He gave me a queer look.

"You think 'er pretty gel?" says he.

"She's the most famous beauty o' the Russian aristocracy," I told him, remembering what the skipper had said to the chief.

"Go'blimme!" he says.

Then he began to talk fast about blarsted Judies and such, and balmy skippers and the like. He wound up by saying that the woman who come on board was some kind o' devil.

"She 'as the hevil heye," says he. "All bad luck she bling the ship."

"Evil eye, yourself, you squintin' yellow sausage," says I.

"You go look-see," he says. "You think that Judy all light? Oh, stlike me blind, you go look see! Bad Judy, bad heye, bad luck! Bimeby chuck 'er hoverside. My word!"

I couldn't understand the man, though I could tell he was in earnest. So when I'd finished eating, I went and had a "look-see." It was just the chance I was looking for because when I stepped out o' the mess-room and looked for'ard, what did I see but the Russian princess, herself, leaning over the rail at the break o' the bridge gazing down on the for'ard deck, and her maid sitting by the door o' the captain's room, sewing.

I knew them apart because the Princess Stepanover was wearing a gorgeous fur coat and trimmin's to match, while the other female wasn't got up elegant at all, but had on a plain black dress and a little white lace thing on her head, and was working besides. I says to myself:

"Billy Murray, this is your opportunity. You're shaved, and you got on a clean shirt. Now you just take a turn along the other side o' the deck and turn the corner and come down on the lady accidental-like. You'll have a good look at her, and she'll have a good look at you."

I did. I walked around the corner of the house and she turned at the sound o' my feet. I got a look at her; oh, I got a fair, straight look at that flower o' the Russian aristocracy, and I'm telling you it give me the kick of my life! She got a good look at me, too, I guess; but I ain't sure, because her eyes fouled each other so bad a guy couldn't tell if she was lamping the foc'sle head or the poop.

Yes, sir, the Princess Stepanover Sherbakoff was cock-eyed. And that wasn't all. She was forty year and more, and built on the lines of an oblong box, and her front teeth was bucked. Great Scott, when I seen her face I nearly swallowed my tongue. And I started aft so quick I almost fell over the chair the maid was sitting in.

I pulled up short, and took a slant at the maid. Say, she could stand being looked at! In the way o' looks, that little Frenchy was everything her boss wasn't I knew she was French by the cut o' her jib, so neat and trim—and besides, all maids are French, ain't they? The princess had turned for'ard again, and wasn't paying me no attention, so I started right in to get acquainted.

She had looked up kind of startled when I nearly ran her down, but she wasn't scared, and as soon as she seen my face she smiled. I could see she liked me. So I spoke to her in her own lingo, which I know fine from having sailed into French ports during the war.

"*Bong joor, mademoiselle,*" says I. "*Come on sa va? Tray bien? Bong, bong.*" Which all means, "I'm glad to see you looking so fine."

She looked surprized to hear her own tongue from a feller like me; but she looked sort o' pleased, too, and smiled some more and nodded. I didn't have much time to spend with her, and I wanted to make myself solid, so I took a chance and went right on. I've found that rushin' 'em is the best way.

"*Vooset tray ammobluemaw,*" says I, meanin', "I know you're a good scout." "*Tu ay jolly, mademoiselle; tu ay chameau.*"

She got kind o' red, and started to get up. I thought maybe I was going too fast; but having started, I was bound to go on.

"*Vooset tray mignon,*" says I. "*Nez paw?*"

She blinked a couple o' times, and I could see that having a nice-looking young feller come on her so sudden had kind of taken the wind out o' her sails for a minute, so to speak. She didn't know what to say, so she says:

"*Jinny come papa, monsoor.*" Which doesn't mean what it sounds like at all, but just, "I don't savvy you."

So I began all over, and then she took the wind out o' my sails.

"Can you not speak the English?" says she, just as good as you or me could say it.

"Well, I'll be switched," says I, only I ain't certain I didn't say something stronger, I was that surprized. "Ain't you French?" I says.

She laughed at me; yes, sir, she laughed right in my face, and it sounded so nice and she looked so pretty I didn't care a darn. And she says—

"Oh, yes, *monsoor,* I speak the French also."

And then she rattled off something in the frog lingo, but did it so quick I couldn't understand a word.

"Well, you caught me fair enough," I says. "What is it they call you when you're at home? Marie, I'll bet a franc. Come on, *cherry—kelly vater nom?*"

"Oh, *la, la,*" she says, laughing some more. "*Ah, Marie, wee, wee.*"

She said it so loud, and laughed so hard, the Princess Stepanover turned around and looked at us, to see what all the noise was about.

THAT is, I suppose she was looking at us, though, you understand, a feller couldn't rightly say just what she was looking at. It's most uncommon uncomfortable to be looked at that way. All the time she was on the ship, the Princess Stepanover would give me a sort o' hollow, creepy feeling inside whenever I had to face her. Just like the feeling a guy gets sometimes before bad luck hits him. And when she talked it was worse, because her voice sounded like two files being rubbed together.

She talked just now. She let out a string o' words at little Marie that must have been Russian, because they sounded so hard to say and wasn't like any Christian lingo I could know. I thought the old girl was ragging the poor kid for talking with one o' the crew.

"She's a holy fright, princess or no princess," I says, out o' sympathy. "I'd hate to be in your shoes, *cherry,* and have a party like that for a boss. Is she swearin' at you?"

"She says the sun is very bright this morning," answered Marie.

For a minute I was kind of mad, and I put my cap right back on me head. Princess or no princess, it wasn't good manners to poke remarks at a guy's face and hair which he can't help the color of. Then I remembered that maybe the old girl was looking at the sun, and not at me, even if the sun was over her shoulder. And I says to Marie—

"Well, if it's sunshine she likes, you'd better tell her to make the most of it, because by the looks o' the sky up to wind'ard, it's going to come down on us pretty thick."

"Oh, is it the storm?" she piped up, a little scared.

"I don't know about that, not being a bridge ornament," says I, "but don't you worry none, *cherry,* because I'm here to look out for you."

"You are so fonny; I am oblige," she says.

"Don't mention it," I told her.

I was going to slip her a lot more o' the soft stuff, when I seen the third stick his head out of the engine-room door and look my way kind of hard. It was quite a few minutes past the time when I should have relieved him, and knowing him for a guy without any manners to speak of, who was just as like as not to butt in where he wasn't wanted, why I hurried on and told Marie just what was on my mind. I didn't have no time to soften the news, like I had intended.

"Look here, *cherry,* did you ever hear o' the Spanish flu?" I says to her. "You *comprepaw—la grippe Español?* Well it's broke out on board this ship. Two, maybe three, men are down with it already. Bad sick—*tray mylad.*

"Now, my *peteet cherry*," says I, "if you have any influence with that missin' link, over there against the rail, you get her to make the skipper put in at Hakodate, which we'll pass some time tomorrow night. It's thirty days to Frisco," I says, "and it's dollars to doughnuts we'll never make it with the flu aboard."

She looked at me with a little frown, and she says, "I have already heard of the sick engine-man—" yes, sir, that's how she referred to the chief engineer—"but," says she, "the captain tells me it is not serious."

Then she looked across at the old girl's back, and smiled a little.

"I am quite sure," says she, "that the princess will not agree to stopping the ship. No, no. The princess is, oh, of such eagerness to proceed. *La grippe*—poo, poo!" She snapped her little fingers, and says, "And you, so gallant a *monsoor*, have fear of *la grippe*?"

Well, what could a feller do? I seen it wasn't no use, so I give up.

"Oh, all right," I says. "Maybe it ain't so serious, and anyway I've had it. It's the other jaspers on board I'm thinkin' of. But if they bump off the world won't miss 'em much. And if your boss has to go over the side sewed up with a grate-bar, why, I'd look on it as an act o' God, and wouldn't be more than ordinary sorry.

"But with you it's different," says I. "You're too sweet and pretty to have anything happen to you. Them's my sentiments," I says. "So you just look after yourself, and keep wrapped up warm, and if you feel yourself getting a cold, why, hop into bed and let the old girl wait on herself. I got to go to work now, so ta-ta and *arrewar, jay very voo encore*, my dear."

III

"THANK Heaven, you're here at last," says Mister Lindsay to me when I got below, and he started for the deck before ever I'd finished feeling around. "I'm just about dead-O with walkin' and worry," says he. "I've had a bad time, donkeyman, and you'll have worse. Ye'll no sit down this watch, I'm thinking."

He thought right. That feller left me with a hot crank-pin that was enough by itself to keep a man busy; and he'd no sooner got out o' sight than the air-pump suction went on the blink quicker than a feller could say Jack Robinson. Then the evaporatin' plant began to leak salt water into the fresh. And as if all that wasn't enough, why, I found another one o' my coolies was laid up sick, and them that was on watch was so scared and ugly it was hardly possible to get a workin' head of steam out o' them.

I'd figured on having sort of a pleasant watch, thinking about the little Marie and planning out chances to talk with her again. But I wasn't able to think of anything except the job in front o' my nose. No, I didn't sit down that watch.

I had six long hours of it and then the third came down again to relieve me. He looked tired out, and I didn't need him telling me so to know that he hadn't slept. It seemed he had been busy all afternoon nursing the deucer, who was his particular chum. Leach, he said, was living up to his cough, and going into pneumonia.

"How is MacWimble?" I asked him.

"Better," says he. "He's sitting up in his bunk, swearing at the noise o' the engines, which he says makes his head ache. He'll be down below in the morning, he says, to give you and me a piece of his mind about the proper way to run a plant."

"Sitting up and swearing, is he?" I says. "Well, the crazy nut will be down on his back, instead of down below, in the morning, if I know anything about this sickness. Has anybody else been took with it?"

"Why, no; that is, no one except another Chinaman, one of the deck-hands this time," says he. "But that's nothing; for with this sharp weather, it's to be expected that the coolies will sicken. The one who got bad last night in your watch give up the ghost a couple of hours ago, and the bosun has him out on the fore hatch now, fitting him to his canvas jacket. I understand he'll be dumped when the skipper has his supper finished."

"Croaked, has he?" I says. "Well, that's number one for the flu. Is there any talk of putting into Hakodate?"

"Not that I heard," says he. "Which reminds me, donkeyman, that if you'll take my advice, which is from a bloke what wishes you well, you'll stop gabbing this nonsense about plague ships and the like. I have it straight from the mate," says he, "that the Old Man is wild about your stuffing the passengers with yarns which, even if they was true—which of course they ain't—it wouldn't be your business to tell.

"The mate says that the Russian general feller went to the skipper and demanded to know the truth about this yarn what the princess had from a member o' the crew; and Chitpole blew up, and swore you was a balmy liar, and he'd clap you in irons if he heard another word out of you or about you, or if he had another report about your pestering the princess. So you'd better take my advice and stow the gaff and steer clear o' the women. Blasted cheek, I call it myself, for a feller like you to be chinnin' with princesses."

Well, it made me sore. I figured I was good enough to talk to any one I felt like talking to, and I says so to Lindsay, and was willing to say so to the Old Man himself, had he been handy.

"Besides, I wasn't talking to the princess," I says. "And after getting a fair look at her, you couldn't bribe me to get chummy with her. I was talking to the maid," I says, "as you seen for yourself when you forgot your manners so far as to rubber at us. And I got a perfect right to talk to her, and to the other dame too, if I feel like it, because I'm a free-born American citizen," says I, "and your lime-juice morals don't apply to me."

There wasn't any more said between us at that time, because I went up above, not wishing to start an argument with the third. Also, I was so riled up I was going to show them fellers, all and each, that I could talk to whoever I chose. Just as soon as I got out on deck, I looked up on the bridge, and seeing Captain Chitpole there, I started for'ard, all dirty as I was, looking for the little Marie. I had my mind made up to say hello to her in plain sight of everybody, even if I had to hang around all night for the chance. I was going to say hello to the princess, too, if I saw her. I says to myself—

"I'll show them!"

Well, I wasn't able to show them, because neither of the women was on deck. I guessed maybe they wasn't feelin' very well. A cap o' wind had broke on us during the afternoon, just like I told Marie it would, and a bit of a sea had got up, to which the ship danced. It was bitin' cold, too; and since I was dressed light for the engine-room, I says to myself that I would be an awful rummy to freeze to death waiting for a chance to spite the bridge ornaments, which I could very well do tomorrow in the sunshine.

But before I left the deck I did get a glimpse of one o' the passengers. This was the famous general and prince who didn't belong to the fightin' branch. He was half doubled over the lee rail, with an arm crooked about a stanchion, gazing most earnest down at the sea. From observin' him when the ship dipped, I seen that a seasick prince was just as ordinary and homely a sight as a seasick coal-passer.

While I was in the mess-room, having my supper, the bridge gave a bell to the engine-room and the ship slowed down and paid off into the trough. The steward says the burying was on and ducked for'ard to see it. I followed him, for the same reason.

THE ceremony was down on the fore deck, and it was interestin' enough to look at. Seeing the stiff was a Chink and a heathen, the Old Man didn't come down from the bridge to read prayers; but all the Chinks what wasn't on duty had turned out, and they had bushels o' Chink prayers on red paper strips which they hove over the side before and after the plank was tipped.

It was past seven o'clock in the evening, but being that it was the Fall o' the year, and we was in the high latitudes, it was still broad daylight, and there was a wild and bloody sky off to wind'ard, where the sun was dipping. I was standing at the break o' the bridge, along with the second mate and the steward and the Russian feller—who looked like he didn't care a whole lot if they buried him instead o' the Chink—and the second mate, pointin' to the sky, says—

"That means a buster, or I'm a lubber."

Well, they dumped the corpse, and all the Chinks went "*Aie-e-e!*" as loud as they could; and before they was through, why, the ship rolled in the trough and shipped a big sea which washed the corpse back on board again, and filled the deck, and rolled them coolies around like they was so many ninepins.

That sea breaking on deck made a big noise and o' course the old box shook like she had ague. Before she'd recovered and lifted, I heard an awful screech behind me, and here come the princess in her kimono, with her hair flying and her eyes rollin' something awful. Little Marie, looking sort o' scared herself, come after the old dame, trying to catch and quiet her.

Well, the princess seemed to be lookin' at me, but I guess who she really saw was the Russian gent, because she fair threw herself in his direction and grabbed him about the neck. She jabbered something that sounded wild, and I guess it was, "Save me! Save me!" But the general didn't seem to care, because just then the old ship was wabblin' most peculiar; and he just rolls his head and says, "*R-r-rup, r-r-rup,*" and let it go at that.

The second mate was lookin' flustered and trying to tip his sou'wester to Marie, which he couldn't because it was buttoned beneath his chin. So I give him a look o' scorn and stepped plumb in front of him and took the kid by the arm and says soothin' to her, "Now, *cherry* my dear, don't be frightened; everything is all o. k., and I'm here."

At which that greaser said—

"Strike me pink!"

And Marie looked mad and says: "Frightened? I am not frightened. It is that woman. Oh, she will drive me mad!"

I took a squint at the old girl, who was hanging on to the poor general for dear life. I says:

"I would have been mad long ago if I had your job, kid. She looks like she'd try an angel's patience," says I. "Now, you just say the word, Marie, and I'll take her by the scruff o' the neck, princess or no princess, and lead her back to bed. You just say the word," says I, and give her arm a squeeze.

She drew back from me; but I could tell by the little laugh in her eyes that she wasn't sore.

"You are such a brave Meester Donkey," says she. "But no, it is not necessary; I shall attend to her."

Well, she looked so cute I was just going to ease hold of her arm again, when Captain Chitpole's voice come booming up against our ears. There he was, not a dozen feet away, having just come down from the bridge.

"Madam, is that red-'eaded swab annoyin' you again?" he says.

Marie come right back at him.

"Why, no, he is of assistance," says she.

The skipper's face looked so disappointed when he found he didn't have no excuse to bawl me out that I could hardly keep from laughing. I started in to say something myself that would take him down another peg, and give him a chance to swear at me—because I wanted Marie to see how mean the feller treated me, and it would make her feel sorry for me, which is always a good state o' mind to get a dame into. But the princess butted in and spoiled my plan before I could think of something that would start Chitpole going and still wouldn't give me away.

Not that I could blame the old girl, considering what was like to happen to her just then. You see, all this happened a lot quicker than I can tell it; and while the Old Man was scowlin' at me, and I was scowlin' back at him, the head of the ship was lifting, and the fore deck was shedding the flood o' water, and the Chinks was picking themselves up and saying out loud just what they thought about it all.

That's when the princess let out a fresh screech that was her worst yet, and when we all looked down we seen the Chink bosun standing at the foot of the bridge ladder, waving his arms over his head and howling Chink curses at the poor dame. That's what scared her; and the bosun did look wicked.

All the other Chinks that could travel was slipping and crawling aft to back up the bosun, and there was a bad air about the lot o' them. And lying square in the center o' the fore hatch, what did we see but the corpse what had just been dumped; when he was washed back on board, he come to rest in the exact spot they'd lifted him from when they put him on the plank. From the way the crowd gave the hatch a wide berth in passing, I could tell that accordin' to their nations the stiff's return was mortal bad luck.

From the way the bosun carried on it was plain that the princess was the cause of it all. The feller acted like a wild man, dancing and cursing, and the other Chinks, as they come up behind him, turned themselves into a sort o' chorus to what he said. The captain looked down at them and I heard him say to himself—

"Good 'eavens, what's this?"

And then he says to the second mate, very soft and urgent—

"Run into the chart-room, mister, and fetch my pistols!"

The greaser beat it, but the fun started before he took a half-dozen steps. The bosun started up the ladder toward us and it was plain he was coming after the princess. He had a screw-driver in his hand, and that's about as wicked a weapon in a fight as a feller can lay hold of. Well, the princess was screechin' and hanging on to the general, poor feller, who was just beginning to savvy that something was wrong, and Marie was chattering and trying to drag the princess away, and the Old Man was shoutin', "Hurry up, mister, hurry up!" after the second mate; so I seen it was time for me to take a hand.

I jumped to the head o' the ladder, and when the bosun came within range he made a jab at me which I dodged, and I busted him right on the jaw with my fist, and he turned a back flip and landed square on the heads of a bunch of his men who had started to crowd up the ladder after him.

I'd knocked the bosun cold, as it afterward developed, and he emptied the breath out of four or five of his men when he flopped on top of them. The mess it all made give us a chance on the bridge deck.

I grabbed the princess and, not being able to pry her loose from the general, why, I took him too by the slack o' his collar and rushed both of them toward the door of the skipper's room, which wasn't more than twenty steps away.

Marie followed me, and I bundled them all inside, and give Marie a hug with one arm, and I would have kissed her only she looked so scandalized, and then I shut the door behind them and turned back to help the skipper.

But the skipper didn't need no help, because with their boss laid out, the coolies didn't have any guts for a scrap. The lot o' them sneaked for'ard into the fo'csle, leaving the bosun laying on the deck. When the second mate showed up, which he did directly, with a brace o' pistols, the skipper had him and me pick up the bosun and pack him into the spud locker—which was empty, because that hungry hooker didn't carry spuds—and iron him and lock him in.

Then we had to go for'ard and dump the stiff, because we couldn't persuade any of the Chinks to come out on deck and touch him; not even when the Old Man poked a gun into the alleyway and swore he'd empty it among them if they didn't turn to. They didn't care, they was so full of superstition. The Number One Chink, who was boss feller of the black gang, spoke up and says:

"No can do. You make finish dead fellow; maybe can do."

So we had to finish the buryin' ourselves. Then the crew come out, meek as lambs in action but looking mighty sullen and chattering among themselves at a great rate. They went about their work just as if nothing had happened.

WELL, the Old Man was stumped. He swore he'd never heard or seen the like in thirty years o' seafarin'. He says he would keep the bosun in irons until we made port, and then he'd have him up in court for murder and mutiny. He says he'd like to know what has got into the crowd, they having been such a quiet lot, even for coolies. He asked the boss Chinks what was the matter, and what they meant by it, but they just looked blank and says—

"Velly bad luck, velly 'flaid."

And that's all he could get out o' them. But I savvied what was wrong, because I remembered what the steward had told me. I up and told the skipper.

"It's that cock-eyed dame," I says. "The men are scared o' her; they think she has the evil eye."

"Stuff and nonsense, shut up," says the skipper.

"All right, sir," I says. "But when the flu gets going good and strong in the fo'csle those fellers are goin' to blame the Russian princess and start in to raise ——. You'll see," says I.

"Young feller, m'lad, I've told you before that you're a bloomin' pest on this ship," says he, "and so you are, though I'll admit you're 'andy with your dukes. I ought to give you a dressing-down," he says, "on account o' all the ruddy lies you told the ladies. Ain't you ashamed o' yourself to be scarin' passengers?" he says. "Now I horder you once and for all to stop it! Hi 'aven't got the flu on my ship," says he, "and I wouldn't 'ave it on my ship, and so, Mister Donkeyman, you'll clap a stopper on your trap and never mention the subject again. If you do, why, Hi'll make you suffer," he says.

Well, I was so disgusted with the old fathead after all what had happened that I didn't even try to answer him back. What was the use? I just walked away. What could I do with fellers who were so proud and pig-headed they would commit suicide before they give away an inch?

Why, on my way to my room, who did I meet but old MacWimble shuffling along in his nightgown, with a blanket half-wrapped about him, and the bitter wind bending him near double! Aye, the old fool had heard the racket, and, sick or no, he had to turn out to see what was the matter.

"Good-by to you," I says to myself when I passed him.

IV

THE next twenty-four hours put the kibosh on that voyage; although it didn't end it by a long shot.

To begin with, the Old Man put us through the Sangar Strait that night, although it's narrow waters and a bad coast and the gale was making besides. But I'll say this for Chitpole, he was a prime sailorman, even if he was a —— fool. With the daylight we were in the Pacific, with Hakodate astern and naught ahead but foul weather. We were on the Great Circle course to Frisco, and bouncing into a screamin' nor'wester which had the breath of the arctic in it, even if it wasn't October yet.

That bitter weather took bitter toll. Our Chinks, you understand, had stewed in Canton slums since the time o' the Flood, and all they had to eat was a little fish and rice, and I don't suppose there was enough clothes among the lot to dress up a decent scarecrow. Even without the flu on board I guess they'd have had a hard time in that temperature. With the flu on board and at work among them—well, it was just ghastly. They took sick in gangs just as soon as the cold touched them.

The third could only get six men down below for the morning watch, and when I took the plant over at noon I could muster but five, and one o' them was wabbly on his pins. The deck crew was in just as bad shape, and the second mate had to go for'ard with a hand-spike and shanghai a man to relieve the wheel.

By nightfall I guess there must have been a full dozen of the poor devils layin' in that icy pit o' a fo'csle, coughin' up their lives; while them that was still well was so scared they couldn't do no more than bluff at working. They couldn't be clubbed to the starboard side o' the bridge deck, because the door to the princess' cabin was on that side o' the ship and it was their belief—as I had it from the steward—that them as fell sick did so because the old girl looked at 'em with her evil eye.

To make matters worse, when it came to bossing them, why, one o' the first jaspers to fall sick was the Number Two Chink, and, the bosun being locked up, that left only the Number One Chink as interpreter. The steward could talk English, o' course, and so could the quartermasters, a little bit, but they didn't have no face, and the coolies wouldn't mind them, so they couldn't be used.

The upshot was that, although we needed Number One down below mighty bad, the Old Man yanked him up on deck and left Lindsay and me to get along as best we could. We got along, but I sprained my thumb before my watch was half over.

I guess that before the day was very far gone old Chitpole was good and sorry he hadn't taken my advice. Not that he said so; why, he was such a mule he wouldn't admit it was flu even now. But after being up all night, he stayed up all day, and he walked up and down the bridge, looking plumb flabbergasted, saying to the mates as how he'd never seen the like in his born days, and what had got into his crew, anyway, that they should act like this.

He went for'ard into the fo'csle twice during the morning, with the mates at his back, and dosed all the sick with physic, which, the greaser told me, they held in their mouths until his back was turned, and then spit out on the floor.

The greaser said the coughin' in that place was like the rattle of a riveter's air-gun. Oh, I guess old Chitpole was sorry all right he hadn't listened to me. It was too late now. He couldn't turn back into the straits in that foul weather.

But the thing that took all the starch out o' the Old Man happened about one o'clock in the afternoon, while I was on watch and so busy trying to keep the old wagon from stopping altogether that I didn't have hardly any time to think about it when Lindsay shouted down the news to me.

It was poor MacWimble shipping out. The old feller had his relapse, just like I knowed he would have, after the crazy way he'd behaved, and his pipes choked up and he knocked on the pearly gates and they let him in. He was a pretty good scout, and a number-one mechanic, but too stubborn in his opinions. That's why he died out o' his time.

The third come down later and asked me to stand his watch, or part of it, for him. He wanted to stay with the second, who, he says, was mortal bad, and it looked like he would kick the bucket too. The third was mighty gloomy and he looked plumb wore out from loss o' sleep, due to his nursing his friend.

"Whatever will become of us all, donkeyman?" he says. "Why, it's a plague we have on board!"

Now was my chance to say, "I told you so," but I didn't have the heart. I told him to never mind me, but stick with his chum as long as he wanted.

"How's the Old Man?" I asked him before he went up. "Does he admit yet that it's the flu?"

"The Old Man isn't in any condition to admit anything," says he.

Then he tells me that Chitpole was mooning around the decks like a daft man. Drink and grief, it was. He says that the skipper broke down and cried when MacWimble went, and that it seemed sort o' to unbalance him. The two men had been shipmates since long before the war and they was mortal fond o' each other. Well, what with grief and fatigue the Old Man went to his private stock, and he lapped up a bit too much, says the third.

"The mate's down with it, too," says he.

I wasn't surprized; I was expecting to hear it. Mister Thompson had had a walkin' case for a couple o' days. He was one o' the first to catch cold and I suppose he spread the bugs around the ship. Anyway, when he heard o' MacWimble's death he collapsed on the bridge and had to be helped to his room. But I guess he was ready to cave in, anyway.

"I suppose the second mate will have to get the chief ready for Davy Jones," says Lindsay, "because he can't capture a coolie who'll admit he can use a palm and needle, and the Old Man won't turn the bosun loose. My ——, I hope Leach gets better!"

"How about the passengers?" I asked him.

"Don't know, and don't care," he says. "Haven't seen hide or hair o' them today. Suppose they're afraid o' the deck; or else they're sick, too."

"Most likely they're seasick," I says. "They're high-mucky-mucks, and all hands would know it if one o' them got the flu."

"Let 'em be seasick," says he bitterly. "I kind o' half-believe the Chinks are right, and that that ugly old hag is a Jonah. I kind o' half-believe," says he, "that I'd lend a hand in dumping her, s'elp me!"

WELL, the second didn't get better, but went the same road the chief went, along about eight bells in the afternoon watch. He was a pretty nice feller with all his faults, was Leach, and if I'd had time I would have felt pretty bad over his bumpin'-off. He was a first-class mechanic, but a hard case and a drinker, which I guess was the reason he went so quick.

But when the second mate whistled me the news from the bridge I was having troubles of my own. My handful of Chinks in the stokehold was tired out, and their relief was due. But the relief didn't come down. The coolies wanted to knock off anyway, and leave the fires to feed themselves; and I had my hands full preventing them. Especially since I couldn't leave the throttle for more than a few minutes at a time, because, on account o' the gale, there was a big following sea, and although the ship was deep-laden every now and then her stern would lift out o' water and the engines would begin to race.

The steam was down so low I couldn't get more than fifty turns out of the engines, although our standard speed called for seventy-six; and the fires needed cleaning; and my gang would have beat it and left me alone if I hadn't had savvy enough to clap a padlock on the grating over the fiddly ladder, so that the only way they could get on deck was past me, through the engine-room. They didn't try that but once.

Finally I whistled up to the bridge through the speaking-tube and says to the second mate:

"Look here, Mr. Galt," says I, "if I don't get my fires cleaned the ship will stop, and I can't get them cleaned unless you haze a few fresh hands down here to relieve my watch."

"It's little I can do for you, Yank," he answers. "I've been trying to lay hold of a helmsman myself for the past half-hour. I can't leave the bridge alone or the blighter I 'ave at the wheel will cut and run; and I can't call on the skipper, because he's tight. I'll sing out to Lindsay," he says, "and maybe he'll be able to do something."

I waited a long while and nothing happened except the marker of the steam gage dropping back. Then, just as I was about to call the bridge again, I heard, above the noises of the engines and the gale, a string o' three pistol-shots. Well, my heart popped into my throat. I thought sure the coolies was up and coming aft.

It was risky to leave the engines to themselves, but I took the chance. I shut the throttle until they were no more than turning over dead slow, which might play hob with the steerin' o' the ship while she was before the gale, but would prevent a smash-up if she began to race, and then I grabbed the iron jackin'-bar I had handy on the log-desk and lit out for deck to take a hand in the shindy.

There wasn't a soul in sight when I reached the deck, but I could hear the row going on for'ard and on the other side of the ship. When I reached the port ladder, leading from the bridge deck to the fore deck, I found myself on the edge of an elegant free-for-all.

The Chinks was up; there was no mistakin' that. They were boiling out o' the fo'csle and throwing themselves on the afterguard, who were fightin' them off. That is, Mr. Galt was fighting them off. He was laying about him with a short pennant made o' inch-wire cable, with an eye spliced in one end, and keeping a clear space in front of him, and trying to prevent them from slipping in behind him; and his fighting like that was covering the retreat of Mr. Lindsay, who was staggering aft toward the bridge with the skipper's body over his shoulder. The skipper looked like a dead man and Lindsay himself was bleeding.

Well, I took this in at a glance, as I ran for'ard, and I says to myself:

"More trouble! It never rains but it pours."

And by that time I'd reached the second mate's side and began to lend a hand with my jacking-bar.

My joining in the row ended it. I don't mean to say that Mr. Galt wasn't handling the situation all right. He was, and very likely he'd have kept 'em back alone, and Lindsay and his load, and the greaser himself would have got back to the bridge deck; but when the coolies seen me and my bar coming for them, why, they lost heart, and the whole lot turned tail and beat it back into the fo'csle, leaving one o' their number lying on the deck. He was Number One Chinaman, and he was dead, shot through the head.

Mr. Galt and me got back to the bridge deck, and seeing all was now quiet and clear for'ard, we looked to see what had become o' Lindsay. He was just packing the skipper into the saloon, which ran right across the for'ard end of the deck-house, and was the room just for'ard of the one the princess and Marie occupied. We followed him as far as the door, and when I looked in, why, what did I see but the little Marie standing by a port which overlooked the fore deck, holding in her hand in a very business-like way a service revolver that was half as long as her arm! Yes, sir; and she was as cool as an icicle.

"Well, the very minute I seen her, she tossed the gun on the divan, which ran the whole length o' the room, and hustled to the table, which was bare, and upon which Lindsay was just dumping the Old Man.

"He is dead? But no!" she says, with just about as much excitement in her voice as if she was speaking of the man in the moon.

"Not yet," says the third. "But pretty near, for he has a knife thrust betwixt 'is ribs. And I've a cut on my neck, as ye see."

Then somebody said—

"My 'eavens, what is it, what is it?"

Looking beyond her, I saw the mate bedded down on the divan, snug as a bug in a rug, and near him, on the floor, was a mattress that held the Chink mess-boy. There was a sound o' snivellin', too, and there was the Princess Stepanover bawlin' into a handkerchief. So I savvied that Marie had gone and turned the saloon into a hospital and herself into a nurse.

I was going into the room to lend a hand when the second mate took my arm and walked me away.

"Come on, Yank, we've got work to do," says he. Then he cried out, "Strike me pink, there goes your watch!"

Well, I looked for'ard, where he pointed, and sure enough the last o' my firemen was just ducking into the fo'csle.

"How much steam have you got?" he wanted to know.

I told him what I'd had a couple of minutes before, when I left below, and he nodded, and says it would do.

"I'm going to heave her to," he says, "and then we'll just keep enough way on her for the helm."

I looked up on the bridge, half expecting to see the wheel vacant. But the quartermaster was on the job.

"I got him ironed to the wheel," says Galt. "There's another one shut up in the chart-house. I'll 'ave helmsmen whatever happens."

He went up on the bridge and I ducked below to handle the engines at his orders. So he put her nose to it and let her drift; and after I'd slowed the engines until they was just turning over, I went into the stokehole and pulled some clinkers out o' the fires and stoked up heavy so they wouldn't need attention for a half-hour or more. I'd just finished and was cooling off under the engine-room ventilator when the second mate come down the ladder.

V

"I'VE left Lindsay on the bridge till I get back," he says. "Everything is quiet for'ard for the time being."

"Is Mr. Lindsay hurt very bad?" I asked him right off, for I was thinking what a bad fix we'd be in with just one deck officer and one engineer able to work.

"Just a scratch," says he. "But the captain is stuck deep. The little lady has him tied up shipshape, and she says 'e has a chance. She seems to know a lot about wounds and the like, and I gather she was a nurse in the war."

"Ah, that's my little Marie you're talkin' of," I says in a proud voice. "So she's started a hospital, has she? —— knows, we need one. I knew she was true blue the first time I clapped eyes upon her. She may be just a maid, but she's worth a dozen cock-eyed ladies what can't do nothin' but bawl and screech. Yes, sir," says I, "she's the lass for me!"

He looked at me kind of hard, and scratched his chin.

"Well, I must say you 'ave swank to spare," he says, "you talkin' like that, and you just a common donkeyman. Strike me blind, what nerve!" says he, or words to that effect. "But I didn't come down here to talk about females," he says. "What's to be done?"

"Yes, what?" I answered him.

"This old scow has gone and got 'erself into a blurry mess," he says, "and it looks like you and me will 'ave to pull her out of it."

He spoke in a hearty way that did me good just to hear. I warmed up to that feller. He was younger than the other officers, and maybe that accounted for his way o' doing things; and not having spent most o' his life bossing coolies on the China coast, why, he was still human in his manner o' speaking to a feller under him. Besides that, his insides was the right color, as a guy could tell by sizin' him up.

Now old Chitpole was different. He was a martinet, and the sort o' man you'd expect would keep his ship and crew in hand no matter what happened. But his insides must have been the wrong color, because when bad luck took a good slam at him, what did he do but sit down by the side o' his dead friend and open a bottle.

That's what old windbag Chitpole did. But this greaser, now, got right up on his feet and started to fight trouble. Besides me—and the little Marie—this second mate was the only feller on board who held his nerve and worked his wits. I might have had a hard time savin' the ship if he hadn't been there to back me up.

He started in and told me how things stood on deck, and what had happened to cause the fight.

The row occurred, he says, because the Old Man had a drink too much in him, and was a blurry ass anyway. He says that the coolies had been gradually getting out o' hand all morning, not refusin' duty outright, but hanging back and getting sullener and sullener. Then, when the chief died, and they heard of it—which they did just as soon as the white men—they was finished with duty. To bring the matter to a head, why, the princess ventured on deck just as the news about MacWimble spread among them, and when they saw the poor woman every mother's son turned tail and ran for'ard as fast as he could go.

Galt couldn't stop them. He was alone on the bridge, because the mate had just been taken sick, and the captain couldn't be budged out o' MacWimble's room. All he could do was boot the helmsman back to the wheel when he tried to desert with the rest.

Mr. Galt says that he didn't care much, himself, about the crew quitting work. On account o' the gale, there was not much to be done about the decks, and he was glad to see the poor wretches get under cover and away from the cold wind. But he was worried over the slim chance there seemed to be to get a relief down to the stokehold and up to the wheel.

He says as how he tried to get the skipper's permission to heave her to, which would have helped a lot in the problem of handling the ship; and he suggests to the skipper that when she was hove to all the white men that was well be mustered and armed, and that they go for'ard and put the fear o' God into the fo'csle, and when the crowd was in hand again make the best of our way back towards Hakodate. Which was a mighty sensible scheme, and the same one I'd tried to get the skipper to adopt.

The Old Man treated his scheme just like he treated mine. He scorned it. He cursed the poor greaser up and down and across the middle, and says to him that the only thing the matter with the ship was the fact that she had a parcel o' frightened old women for officers who were afraid to haze hands like hands should be hazed, and went to bed as soon as they caught a little cold. And he ordered Mr. Galt to keep the ship on her course, and the hands at work, and he went into MacWimble's room and shut the door.

"I want to be alone with my sorrow, mister," says he.

Well, what could the second mate do? As he says to me, the captain was the captain, no matter how much a blurry ass he was. So he didn't do nothing. He kept the bridge watch, and says the afternoon passed quiet enough, except that the Chink cook deserted for'ard and the mess-boy come down sick and the little Marie, takin' a tumble as to how things was going on board, got busy and had Lindsay help her move the mate and the second engineer and the mess-boy into the saloon, where she could give them nursing.

Then along about eight bells the third came to him all broken up, and tells him that Leach had just signed on for the long voyage. Mr. Galt says he thought that news might wake up the skipper, so he makes bold enough to intrude on his sorrow.

He had his helmsman made fast to the wheel, by this time, with leg irons, so he wasn't afraid to leave the bridge for a minute.

He knocked on the door and stepped in, and he says there was the skipper slumped in a chair, facing the chief, who was covered up with a sheet. When the skipper looked up Galt seen he was pretty mellow.

"What do you want?" says the skipper.

"Mister Leach is dead," replies Galt.

"Dead? Dead? What does the blighter mean by doin' that?" says the skipper. "Is the ship on her course, mister? Very well, go back to your work, sir."

So the greaser went back to the bridge and began to figure out how he could get a relief aft. He says if Lindsay had shown any backbone, he'd have taken a chance and raided the fo'csle with a brace o' guns and marched aft a gang of the well ones. But he knew that a mob of frightened coolies was a wicked kind o' mob and since Lindsay had got panicky he was afraid to tackle the job. If anything happened to him the ship would be in a bad fix.

"I was thinking o' the women," he says.

Then I called for a relief, and he knew something had to be done. He had been yelling for'ard at intervals without any result, but now he cupped his hands and hollered some more, and by and by the Number One Chinaman come out of the fo'csle and stood listening to him. He told Number One to send aft a fresh helmsman and a gang for down below, and went on to explain that if the relief didn't come we was all like to drown. The Chink listened and then went back into the fo'csle.

PRETTY soon a gang come out on deck and started aft, with Number One leading them. Galt thought at first it was the relief, and then he seen there was too many of them, and they didn't have the look of men going to work. He seen there was something up. So he sang out for Lindsay, and when the gang got to the foot o' the bridge-deck ladder he and the third was at the head of the ladder to welcome them.

"Have you come aft to turn to?" he says to Number One; and while he talked he says he spotted a quartermaster and kept an eye on him, for he was going to get another man for the bridge by hook or crook.

"All you men whose watch it is," says

he, "come up here; the rest of you get for'ard."

He was puttin' a bold face on it, and trying to bluff that he wasn't a bit surprized or worried. But it didn't work.

"No can do," says Number One. "We *sabe* talk to captain; no *sabe* turn to."

Well, they looked ugly and determined, and the second mate thought that here was something that was likely to jolt some sense into the Old Man. So he sent the third to call the skipper, while he himself laid hold of a wire pennant and stood by to repel boarders in case they tried to rush the ladder.

The news jolted something into the skipper, but it wasn't sense. He come stamping up to the scene, saw Galt, with fire in his eye and a bit o' lurch in his gait, and he wanted to know in a big voice what all this bloomin' nonsense was about.

"They won't turn to, won't they?" says the skipper. "Well, Hi'll show them!"

He walked right down the ladder, into the midst o' them, which was a silly thing to do; but having done it, there wasn't nothing for Galt and Lindsay to do but follow him and back him up.

"You want to talk to me, do you?" says the skipper to Number One. "Well, you bloody 'eathen, what do you want?"

Number One didn't wilt a bit, like the Old Man expected he would. Instead, he spoke right up in as good English as he could muster, and what he said amounted to just this—he says that great bad luck was on the ship, and that there was dead men and dying men and scads o' sick men in both sides o' the fo'csle, and he goes on to say that the only way to make the sick well and purify the ship was by getting rid o' this bad luck, and then he come right out flat-footed and says that he and his mates know that the bad luck all come from the evil-eyed woman, and that everything she looked at was accursed, and she had brought the gale and cold and sickness.

All hands would die if she stayed on the ship, he told Captain Chitpole; and what he proposed was that everybody join in in hunting down the witch, and when she was caught they would cover her head with a cloth so she couldn't put the kibosh on them as was handling her, and they'd take her and dump her over the side into the sea.

Then, says Number One, the gale would blow out, the sun would shine, the sick would get well, and everything would be hunky-dory and plain sailing once more. If the skipper didn't agree, says Number One, why, he and his mates would never turn to again, because they was as good as dead men, and what was the use o' workin' anyway under the circumstances?

Well, the Old Man disagreed. But he didn't disagree like a wise man; instead he commenced to rave and swear, and lay about him with his fists, and order the gang to go to work at once. Of course, they all ran away for'ard. That is, all except the quartermaster Mr. Galt had his eye on. Mr. Galt grabbed him and hustled him up the ladder to the bridge. He ironed this new feller to the wheel, and took the old feller, who was dead beat after a seven-hour trick, and locked him in the chart-house, where he could lay hands on him when he wanted him again.

The Old Man says he was hornswoggled, or words to that effect, and to think he had lived to see the day when a raft o' coolies would mutiny on his hands, and it would never have happened if his officers was worth their salt, but that since his bosom friend was taken from him he was left without a support to lean against, and he must carry the whole blarsted ship on his own shoulders.

Then he says he would carry the blarsted ship on his shoulders, and show these milksops as how he could do it. And he went to his room and took a swig at the bottle, and belted his pistols on him, and swore he'd turn that bloody scum to or know the reason why; and he called on Lindsay and Galt to back him up.

They tried to argue him out of going for'ard like that. He called them blinkin' cowards, and says if they don't back him up he'll log 'em for showing the white feather. Of course, they would have backed him up anyhow, he being captain and a white man. So he swaggered for'ard with them at his back, and he had the only firearms in the party, because the only other gun loose on the ship was the mate's revolver and Galt had slipped that to the little Marie.

Well, they never reached the fo'csle, because when they got abreast the for'ard hatch out boils the crew with Number One leading them, and the three were attacked. Mr. Galt says that he didn't think the Chinks wanted to hurt them at first; they just wanted to overpower them, so they could do what they wanted with the princess.

But the skipper whipped out a gun and Number One stuck him with a sheath-knife and then heaved the knife at Lindsay and just missed his jugular, and the skipper, before he fell, fired some shots and copped Number One Chinaman through the forehead. A minute later I arrived and the fight was over.

"And that's how it stands," says Mr. Galt. "The crew is in mutiny, and you and me and Lindsay are all that's left to save this ship. We'll 'ave a fight on our hands," says he, "unless we sacrifice that poor woman, which ain't to be thought of. And this fight what's coming, I make no bones about saying it's you, donkeyman, and not the third engineer, I'm depending on, although 'e has a ticket, and you 'aven't."

"Then we had better get up on deck and be ready for it," says I.

"No hurry," he says with confidence. "I know Chinks. They won't face our guns in daylight; it's the darkness we 'ave to fear. They are in a pretty awful shape, by the sound, for in quiet moments one can hear the coughin' and groanin' from the bridge. They buried Number One just before I came down, by heaving 'im over the rail; and at the same time they carried two stiffs out o' the fo'csle and treated them the same way.

"They are in a desperate bad way, and since they think it's a matter o' life and death to them to murder that poor woman, why, they are pretty certain to try and turn the trick tonight.

"Now," says he, "figuring that about 'alf o' them is sick or dead, which is probably too many to figure on, why, that leaves twenty-five or more for fightin' purposes. There are three of us, and three revolvers. Can you think of anything, Yank?"

I could, and I had, and there was a plan in my mind that was all figured out before he had finished with his yarn. I says I had a scheme. But I wanted to learn some more about how things stood.

"Just three of us on our feet to hold them off?" says I. "Well, how about that big Russian who come on board with the ladies?"

"He isn't on 'is feet," the second mate replied. "He's in his bunk, seasick. I never seen a man sicker. When I tried to rouse him out o' it, he just groaned at me; and he don't care if all hands go to Davy Jones, 'imself included."

"The big booby," says I, disgusted. "He's a nice sort o' stiff to be lookin' after princesses."

Mr. Galt showed his English. He was shocked at the way I referred to a prince and passenger. So I let the subject drop for the time being.

"Just one thing more," I says. "Now, I figure we can't overlook no bets. I know our wireless plant ain't had an operator since that fourth engineer got himself drowned off the coast o' Japan, but ain't there somebody on board who can send a distress signal?"

"I sent it myself," he says, "just as soon as the captain's getting hurt placed me in charge. But," says he, "don't build 'opes on that. I sent three dots, three dashes, and three dots, because I learned how to do that when I got my ticket. But that's all I know, and all I'm supposed to know, about the blurry thing. I couldn't give a position, and I don't know 'ow to receive, and neither does any one else on board since MacWimble went. Don't count on the wireless," he says. "It will be a miracle if it helps us."

"All right," says I. "My old granny used to say the Lord helped them what helped themselves. So, come on," I says.

VI

I STOKED the fires again, and then I took a couple of pipe-wrenches and some fittings and some lengths o' steam hose, and the second mate and me went up on deck. He thought mighty well of my plan, when I told it to him, and says he never would have thought of it, and neither would the coolies, and they would have a nice warm surprize when they tried to rush us.

It was still daylight enough to work by, and after sending the third below he lent me a hand at the job, which we finished in jig time. What we did was to cut the steam line to the for'ard winches and connect up the steam hose. We was going to hold that bridge deck with live steam!

I also broke out a searchlight from the engineer stores such as was used to work cargo by at night. It was just a cluster of common lamps with a convex reflector, but we knew it would shed enough light on the for'ard deck to prevent us from being surprized by the fo'csle, providin' we didn't go to sleep entirely.

Just as we finished the steward come along with the supper he had got ready on his oil-stove in the pantry, and it was mighty welcome, for it was long past eatin'-time. We ate where we stood; there was no sitting down for us for a while yet.

That steward was the saddest-looking guy I'd seen yet; the third was joyful beside him. It made a feller feel bad just to look at him standing there so dejected and miserable. Knowing he was just as scared o' the princess as the rest of his countrymen, I was surprized he hadn't ducked for'ard with the cook. I asked him bluntly why he hadn't.

"Hi'm not a Chinese," says he. "Hi'm a Britisher."

So I figured the other Chinks didn't count him one o' themselves, and wouldn't have him with them.

While we was scoffing, Mr. Galt said all at once—

"What's going on for'ard?"

When I looked I seen that the door to the fo'csle alleyway was open and smoke was pouring out. Well, for a minute I was overcome. I thought it was the ship on fire, and so did Galt. But then we saw it was just the portable blacksmith forge, which the Chinks had got out of the bosun's locker and carted into the alleyway and lighted. They did it partly to warm the fo'csle, I guess, and mostly to cook up their rice. They had a couple o' mats of rice for'ard and a scuttle-butt full o' water, so they couldn't starve.

That door being open, and the Chinks able to observe us plainly, give us the chance to do something Mr. Galt and me had been talking over. We wanted to try out our defense in sight of the mutineers. We weren't wishful to cook alive any of the poor devils; we savvied it wasn't natural meanness, but just ignorance, that made them behave like they did; and besides, with so many of them sick, we didn't want to hurt any of the well ones if we could avoid it, because we didn't see how we was to ever make port without their help. So I switched on the searchlight, to let them know they couldn't come aft under cover o' darkness; and then we tried out the steam hose.

The two jets spurted out with a noble roar, and the whole fore deck was covered with white clouds. Through them we could see the yellow boys crowding the doorway, watching us. The exhibition give them something to think about, all right.

Mr. Galt stood at the head o' the port ladder and I was at the starboard one, and we played the jets around until we got tired. Then I shut off the steam and we went to work again. He went up on the bridge to keep lookout, because dark had come; and I went about the gloomiest job I'd ever tackled.

I'd talked it over with Galt, and on account o' my being such a poor hand with a palm and needle he says yes to my suggestion that I put the bosun to work, who was a wizard at fast sewing. Besides, the helmsman being ironed to the wheel had given me an idea. I didn't see why a guy couldn't be tied up in the stokehold, and made to do the coal-shoveling. Poor Lindsay was tired out and I wanted to save him the hard graft of keeping the fires going under the boilers.

So I went to the spud locker and turned the bosun loose. That is, I took the irons off him and put him to work, but I kept my eye on him, and I had one o' the skipper's guns handy in my coat pocket in case he got nasty. But he was as meek as a sheep and never said boo; just seemed to be resigned to whatever happened and didn't even ask any questions. He was a slick one; he fooled me.

I took him to MacWimble's room, where both the bodies lay, and set him to work sewing them up in the bedding. That was the job I had on my hands. I had to bury MacWimble and Leach. It doesn't do to have stiffs laying around a ship; they got to be got rid of in a hurry.

When he had them ready, we packed them out on deck and placed them on a grating. I didn't have any Bible, and if I had, it was too dark to read from it. But it didn't seem right to dump two white men and shipmates without some sort o' service. I didn't know any prayers, so I made up one.

"O Lord," says I, "here come a couple o' poor fellers what didn't know no better. Won't you please take that into account, and oblige, Amen."

And when I had said that, we picked up

the grating and tilted it, and that was the end o' two good mechanics.

When this job was done I took the bosun to the break o' the bridge and showed him the steam jets we had rigged. Then L instructed him to hail the fo'csle. The fo'csle door was shut again, but as soon as he sang out it opened and showed a light, and a lot o' heads popped out. They knew their master's voice, did that crew.

"Now, you tell them," says I to the bosun, "that if any of them try to come aft before daylight, we'll turn steam on them."

He told them. He sing-songed a lot of stuff and the door closed and all was dark again.

"All light, they no come," says he to me.

I took the bosun down below. I found Mr. Lindsay sitting on the waste-can, by the log-desk, in the engine-room. He was nodding, but not sleeping, and he says he wouldn't go to sleep because his wound hurt him, and also he had a can o' black coffee to keep him awake.

He looked as if the bunk was the proper place for him, which wasn't surprizing, seeing he'd been awake for nigh two whole days, what with nursing his chum and standing watch. He was mighty glad to hear that the bosun was going to do the work in the fire-room, and he give me a hand to make the feller fast, so he couldn't cause trouble.

I put a leg iron on the Chink's ankle, and the other half o' the irons I passed through the link of a length o' chain. Then I locked the other end of the chain around a stanchion, with a padlock. The bosun could move in about an eight-foot radius, which was plenty of room for him to attend the fires.

It looked quite safe to tie him up like this; in fact it looked safe to leave him untied, he seemed so meek and willing. The third laughed at the idea o' shackling him; but I remembered this was the feller who had started all the trouble, and I insisted and had my way. Poor Lindsay, he didn't know what a bad, slippery cuss this bosun was; and neither did I.

I WENT back on deck just as soon as possible, because that was where I was needed most. Everything was quiet; Mr. Galt was holding down the bridge and keeping a steady eye for'ard; Marie had put the princess to bed and was resting herself, leaving the steward to look after the sick for a spell; and the weather was moderating steadily, so much so that Galt says it looked like fair weather tomorrow, thank God. So, having a few minutes on my hands, I tried out another idea I had.

I didn't say anything to the second mate about it, because although Galt was a first-class man at his work or in a fight, he was, like most o' his countrymen, a bit soft in the head when it came to handling people o' rank. He always sort o' caught his breath when he spoke o' the princess, and called her "my lady," and " 'er 'ighness," and all the time he could see what a homely old squawker she really was.

Why, he never did get up nerve enough to speak to her direct. He seemed to feel he wasn't good enough.

And it was the same way with the other high-and-mighty we had on board, this Prince-and-General Michael Smirnoff, who didn't belong to the fightin' branch. It never entered his mind that we might put the feller to work, or on guard, or make him a nurse, or do something useful with him, and yet we was so short-handed there was just the two of us to hold the amidships against a score or more o' men who were crazed with superstition.

Galt was quite willin' to see the little Marie work her fingers to the bone takin' care of the sick, but he never dreamed of suggesting that the princess turn to and help at the job. That would have been quite awful. The same way with the prince; Galt thought it was quite all right he should keep to his warm bunk because he was sea-sick, and feelin' unwell.

It made me sore. This prince-my-lord-the-general was a husky-built guy, and good beef by the look o' him. He was supposed to be a sort o' bodyguard to the princess, yet there was we risking our lives to keep her from being chucked into the sea while he lay in bed. I made up my mind I'd have a look at him and maybe do something about it.

Of course, I wasn't sure but it was the flu he had. If so, why, bed was the proper place for him; but then he ought to be moved into the saloon and get nursed. But if it was just seasickness—as both Galt and the steward said—why, I knew what to do with him. If he had laid down to common seasickness, I could get him up, prince or no prince.

I'd sailed in American ships in the days before there was any Seaman's Act to speak of, and in them days if a feller says he was too seasick to work, why, he got his head stuck in a tub o' water, and a clout on the jaw, and a boot in the breeches, and, believe me, that feller got well in a hurry and turned to as chipper as a daisy. It's the layin'-down to it that makes a seasick person feel miserable; and there's no cure like hard graft.

I knocked on the door of General Mike's room, not that I expected him to answer, but just to show I had some manners, even if I was a sailor. Then I opened the door and entered.

He had the light burning, and he lifted his head and looked at me. I looked at him. It was poor MacWimble's room, you remember, and there was a picture o' MacWimble's wife and kids over the head of the bunk which give me a tight throat when my eye hit it. But I forgot about that when I sized up the big lummox lyin' beneath the picture.

Mike was seasick; that was all. He didn't have the sign o' a cold, but he was sort o' green-hued and his eyes rolled every time the ship did.

Well, it was a marvel to me that Mr. Galt could feel inferior before this feller, especially after seeing him in his nightgown. General Mike run to a waist-line, but that was the only imposing thing about him, because his nose was Russian and his head sloped one way and with the light shining on his whiskers, I could see that his chin sloped the other way.

In fact, he didn't have much more chin than a rabbit, which was the reason for his whiskers, I guess. Taken by and full, he was just about as poor a specimen o' man as the princess was of woman. But he did have a high and mighty air.

As I said, he lifted his head and cocked an eye at me. Then he groaned, very hollow-like.

"Not food, not food," says he.

"All right," says I.

He sat up a little higher at the sound o' my voice.

"You are not the steward," he says. "I am so eel; I weesh the steward."

"If you please, sir, the steward is busy, and so will you be pretty soon," says I, very respectful, because I didn't want to startle him too sudden. "Will you get up, general," I says. "We need your help on deck."

"Oh, go away," says he, and he lay down and showed me his back.

I seen I'd have to take measures, so I stepped up to the bunk and stripped the blankets off him. He got a touch o' cold wind that blew in through the door, and this time he sat straight up, and he stared at me with his mouth open like a fish, he was so surprized.

"Now, it's all right, Mike," I says to him, very soothing. "I ain't going to hurt you unless you make me; but I got to have your attention for a minute."

Then I told him in a couple o' words just how things stood on the ship. It looked like he was waking up, he listened so hard.

"Now, you're makin' this voyage to look after the princess, so I've heard," I says. "Well, then, get up and look after her."

He got as far as swingin' his legs over the edge of the bunk; then the old hooker give a long corkscrew roll and dip and he gulped and grabbed his middle and flopped back in bed.

"I have no witality; I am so seek I shall die," says he.

I seen I'd have to take some more measures. So I rolled him out o' the bunk and he hit the deck on all fours with an awful bang.

"This hurts me more than it does you, general," I says, "but I've made up my mind to save your life if I have to kill you doin' it. Get up and get dressed," I says.

He got up. I never saw a feller bounce to his feet any quicker. The fall had fixed his witality all o. k.; and it had fixed his temper, too. He shook his fist at me, and shouted, *"Can-I! Can-I! Can-I!"* so fast he like to have choked. He wasn't asking me could he, either; he was calling me a French name that means "You're a bum," or words to that effect. But I made out like I didn't understand.

"Sure you can," I says. "Hurry up and get some clothes on; you don't want to catch cold with the flu bugs floatin' around."

He tore his hair and whiskers and danced up and down, he was so mad. He looked so funny I couldn't help a grin. Maybe I laughed. Anyway, he grabbed a little skinny cane that was stuck through the straps o' one of his suitcases and I thought he was going to hit me with it.

But no, he fiddled with it a minute and

then out he whips a long, slim sword that was concealed in the cane. He jabbed at me, and I would have been skewered on the spot if I hadn't moved. But I sidestepped right through the door, and when I was outside I sang out to him real urgent—

"Cut it out, you rummy, and act sensible!"

But his dander was up and he was after blood. He come right out after me, and right there on the deck, in the light o' the moon, and the standing lights, we staged as fancy a dance as anybody ever seen in a theater. I skipped around in a big circle and Mike skipped around after me, with his hair and whiskers and the tail o' his nightshirt blowin' out behind him and this wicked-lookin' toad-sticker in his hand. He jabbed at me like a good fellow, but I took good care to keep beyond his reach; and anyway his aim was rotten, because his bare feet kept slipping and sliding on the wet deck.

All the time he kept yelling *"Can-I's,"* and other foreign names at me; and I kept yelling back to stop making a —— fool o' himself; and I guess together we kicked up a fine racket, because I heard the second mate shout from the bridge—

"Stand fast, keep 'em off, I'm coming," him thinking it was the Chinks, while the princess in her room got frightened as usual and began to squawk.

Then it ended as sudden as it commenced, for Prince Mike stuck his big toe through a ring-bolt in the deck and tripped and sprawled on his nose, and his sword went into the scuppers.

"What's this, Yank? Who is it? What's 'appened?" says Mr. Galt, all of a breath.

He had his pistol out and pointed at Mike, not recognizin' him in that rig or position. But then Mike sat up and swabbed his nose and nursed his toe and began to swear. "My good 'eavens, it's 'is 'ighness!" cries Galt.

And he puts away his gun and hoists the feller to his feet, and from the way he did it you'd have thought he was handling a baby, or delicate china, instead o' a six-foot Russian what had just been cured o' seasickness.

Well, by that time the night wind had begun to cool off the general somewhat. He didn't make no move to recover his weapon; and it wouldn't have done him any good if he had, because I'd already picked it up. He began to jab at me with words instead of a sword, and from the way the second mate went, "My word, oh, strike me dead, my good 'eavens," why, he made a better job of it.

Mr. Galt was more horrified to hear I'd laid my dirty paws on a prince than he was to hear of his shipmates' deaths and his captain being wounded. He made such a row, and Mike made such a row, and I made such a row shouting back at them and sayin' Mike was cured and had to bear a hand, even if he was a blinkin' king instead o' just a prince, that I guess it all sounded like repellin' boarders to them inside.

The princess began to screech again, and all at once the door of her room opened and there stood the little Marie, the revolver in her hand and fight in her face, and behind her was the old dame flopped on her knees.

THE minute Mike seen the ladies he seemed to realize what a show he was to look at. He shut upsudden and hopped behind Galt, as if to hide, but seeing he was a bigger man all around, he lapped over at the sides, so to speak.

"What is it?" says Marie.

Mr. Galt lifted his cap and began to stutter, the sight o' the princess on her knees being more than he could stand.

"Can-I, Can-I!" says General Mike, and he added some more words that were rip-snorters by the sound o' them, though I didn't know what they meant.

Marie looked at poor Mike, oozing out all around the second mate, and her eyes got wider and wider and her mouth screwed up. I guess she was more than a little surprized to see him out on deck in that rig, when she thought him snug in bed. As for him, there isn't any describing how coy and ashamed he acted. I took pity on the poor feller and stepped in front of him, too, and then only his head and whiskers showed.

Marie lit up with a nice smile as soon as she saw me.

"So—it is the admirable donkey again," says she, mixin' up my name, but not intentional, you understand. "What have you done this time, Meester Donkey?" she says.

"Just lookin' after your safety, *cherry,*" I says.

She looked so sweet and beautiful, standing there smiling at me, that I forgot for a minute that anybody but me and her was present.

"Kid, the way you look now, you could strike 'em all dead," I says. "I never seen anything so lovely. And you can count on me to look after you," says I, "because when you smile at me like that, why, I could lick all the Chinks that ever shipped out o' China!"

"Good 'eavens!" says the second mate, in a kind o' gasp; and behind me Prince Mike piped up in Russian chatter; and the sound of them brought me to myself all of a sudden.

Mr. Galt didn't say no more, but Prince Mike kept on, and while I couldn't savvy what he said, I could tell from the sound that he was tryin' to do me dirt with the lady. So I thought I'd better do the explainin'. I jabbed Mike in the middle with my elbow, and he had to shut up; and while he was rumbling and grunting I told Marie what I'd done and why.

"He's cured of his seasickness," I says, "and he's needed on deck. You know, my dear, just how short-handed we are. Well, now, honey, I'll take it kindly," says I, "if you'll have the princess stop squawking for a minute and tell this feller to please mend his ways and go and get dressed and come out on deck and stand guard. Maybe he'll listen to a princess where he won't listen to me."

Marie turned around and spoke to the princess, and the old dame shut up her praying in the middle of a word. But when it come to telling General Prince Mike where to get off at, why, the little Marie took that job on herself. She talked to him straight and sharp in his own lingo, and he took it like a lamb, never talking back a single word. Oh, but that girl was a daisy! Maybe she was only a servant, but I'm telling you that when it come to givin' orders and dressin' a feller down she had the bulge on the lot o' us.

When she was done, she says—

"*Monsoor* the prince did not understand; but now he will do as you wish." Then she says to me direct, "And I thank you, my knight, for your brave wigilance." Yes, sir; them's her very words! "In case of trouble you can count on me," she says.

And with that she stepped inside and closed the door.

Mike shook hands with me right away and would have hugged me if I'd have let him; and he calls me his ally and brother in danger. He was just as loving as a minute ago he had been hateful—which, I've noticed, is sort of a habit with the Russians. Then he pranced into his room and says he would be right out as soon as he got his pants on, and then he would "*fah, pooh, pooh!*" all the Chinamen on the ship, which I took to mean he would fight if he had to.

I still had Mr. Galt to settle with.

"My ——, Yank, how could you act like that to 'is 'ighness?" he says, as soon as we were alone. "You actually assaulted the blighter; strike me blue, what cheek! What will the captain say when he 'ears of it?"

"The captain ain't in no condition to hear about it, and anyway, I don't care," I told him.

He shook his head very gloomy and says as how tumbling a prince out of his bed wasn't done in respectable ships, and there was disgrace to face, and all that sort o' thing. It made me mad to hear a full-grown man—a good man, too—cringing like that.

"Look here, mister," I says, pointing to the fo'csle, which was all quiet and dark, "a mutiny of the crew ain't done in a respectable ship, either. We ain't a respectable ship," says I. "We are a plague ship. Also, we are in a —— of a fix. If it was King George himself instead o' Prince Mike," says I, "I'd have hazed him just the same. Now don't look so shocked, and I'll tell you why.

"It's all quiet for'ard," I says, "and after what the coolies seen of our steam jets, and after what the bosun told them about the jets, why, it's likely to remain quiet. The prince can police the deck and keep lookout as well as me," I says, "and if the crew does try a rush, why, we'll need him anyway, because if he jabs at Chinamen half as eager as he jabbed at me, why, he'll be inwincible.

"Meantime, I'm going down below and relieve the third, and let him get a few hours' sleep. I'm looking ahead, mister," I says. "I'm figuring on how we'll get way on this ship, and get into port. We've got to have a man standing by the engines all the time, and Lindsay can do it tomorrow, because by that time I'll need a bit o' sleep, and so will you. Lindsay needs it tonight; he's all in. If the shindy should come tonight, why, a word through the speakin'-tube, or the noise, will call me up in a jiffy to lend you a hand."

Mr. Galt couldn't answer me, because my reasons were too good. So when the Russian joined us in a couple of minutes, all wrapped up in his big coat, with a couple o' fine service automatics in the pockets which he'd got out o' his luggage, Galt got over feelin' bad and disgraced. He went back to the bridge. I told Mike to pace up and down athwartships and keep wide awake and not sit down or his seasickness might come back; and then I went down below.

VII

I EXPECTED to find Mr. Lindsay just where I'd left him, sitting nodding on top o' the waste-can, near the log-desk. But when I got half-way down the engine-room ladder I could see he had moved. When I got to the bottom of the ladder, why, there he was, lying face down on the floor-plates, with his head all bloody and the hammer that had done the job layin' beside him.

Oh, but the jinx was heavy on that ship! It was just one —— thing after another! Believe me, for an instant I had the wind up, as Galt would say, and was scared stiff—and I ain't the scary kind, either. But it was a shockin' thing to come down the ladder expecting to talk pleasant to a man, and find him lyin' dead at your feet!

At least, he looked dead. I couldn't stop to find out for sure, because it was a minute when I had to act and act quick. I looked around the engine-room. Nobody was there, and it was as quiet as a graveyard, except for the regular engine-room noises. The engines were churning over steady and slow and the pointer of the steam-gage was down below 100. I took this in at just a glance, and I knew that whatever had happened to poor Lindsay had happened within the last few minutes.

I jumped over his body, and yelled into the speaking-tube a warning to the bridge.

"Look out for yourselves; something is wrong!" I yells.

Then I beat it into the fire-room with my gun in my hand and half-expectin' to have to use it.

But the bird had flew the coop. There wasn't anybody in the fire-room. The chain was there, still fast to the stanchion, and there was a cold chisel and a broken link at the other end o' the length; but the bosun, who, we thought, was tied up so securely, was gone.

I might have swore at myself for leaving a tool-box in his reach, but I didn't have time; and anyway, a feller can't think of everything, can he? I turned around and hustled back into the engine-room and started to see what I could do for the third.

Well, he wasn't dead. I discovered that just as soon as I placed my hand on him, for I could feel his heart going. But the crack on the head had certainly knocked him into the middle o' next week. He was out, and looked like he'd stay out for a while.

I whistled up to the bridge again, but Galt not answerin' immediately, I didn't wait. The thing to do, o' course, was to get Lindsay up on deck and into the saloon with the rest of the *horses-de-combat*, where Marie could look at his wound. Then I could talk it over with the second mate what effect on the general situation the bosun's getting free and joining his crowd would have. That he had got for'ard I didn't doubt a bit. He could have easy made his way along the other side of the deck at the time I was having my discussion with Mike, and none of us would have seen him.

The first thing to do was shut down the engines, because they were eating up steam and there was nobody on the job to see that the boilers made steam. If I didn't shut down the lights would be spluttering in a minute as the dynamo slowed up, and we needed the lights. So I shoved the indicator over to "Stop" to warn the bridge, and closed the throttle. Then I threw Lindsay over my shoulder and started for the ladder.

But I didn't get him as far as the ladder, because, almost with my first step, the shindy broke out on deck. There was a shot, and right followin' it a short cough of the whistle, which was a signal Galt and I had agreed on. I dropped my load as easy as my hurry allowed and started four bells and a jingle up the ladder; and before I was half-way to the deck the fight was on in earnest, shots and yells all mingled together.

Something was wrong, and things weren't breaking the way we expected. I knew that even before I reached the deck. For one thing, the yells was too near and too plain, and all of a sudden up pipes the princess with her usual yawpin' and it drowned out everything else because it was right in the engine-room hatch, where it didn't have no business to be.

For another thing, I shouldn't have heard any yells at all, because the steam jets should have roared 'em down. But there wasn't any sound o' steam. I knew something had gone wrong with our defense; but I didn't expect to see what I did see when I jumped out on deck.

The very first thing I seen—because it was right against my nose, so to speak—was the cause o' all our troubles. The princess was yellin' bloody murder inside the engine-room hatch, and kickin' up her heels outside; she'd broke loose in a panic at the first shot, and runnin' out of her room and aft to get away, she seen an open port-hole in the engine-room hatch, and, sink me for a swab, if she didn't try to climb through it! She got her head through the port, and stuck at her shoulders, and there she was, with poor little Marie tryin' to pull her out, and she tryin' to squeeze farther in.

Well, it looked like she had good cause to try and get out o' sight, that way or any other way, because when I looked for'ard I saw Chinamen dancing about all over the deck, into the light and out again. They'd carried the bridge. It was pretty dark, because the Chinks had chosen a moment when the moon was behind a cloud-bank, and the electric lights only lit up a little circle, but I could tell by the noise that a scrimmage was still goin' on at the for'ard end o' the house. I started toward that point hot-foot.

I didn't get very far. When I reached the for'ard end o' the engine-room hatch I saw a lot 'o dark shadows climbing over the bunker hatches, so I knew the Chinks had won control of the other side o' the deck. I pumped a couple o' shots at the shadows; I couldn't tell if I hit any of them or not, but they dodged back behind the funnel in a hurry.

Then, before I could make another move, I heard boots clumping, and here come a white man scooting aft with a pack at his heels. I shot again into the mass and this time I knew I'd landed because one dropped and made a blot on the deck and the rest drew back. When the white man passed me I saw it was General Mike.

Just what had happened I didn't know, but I did know that the jig was up so far as holding the bridge deck went. I thought for a minute the jig was up for all hands, anyway. My shutting down the engines was beginning to have effect. The old box had lost her helm, and, heavy-laden and crank as she was, she swung her broadside to the wind.

She begun to roll. It looked like she was going right over. Almost the first sea to hit her was a mortal big one, a number three, I guess, and it boosted her right over on her beams' end. There was an awful crash o' crockery from the cabin, and a rumble under my feet as the coal shifted in the bunkers, and a crash, rumble and shake to the whole ship, as the cargo shifted in the holds, and the deck kept tilting, tilting, and I started to slide and grabbed a funnel-guy and hung on, and when she stopped going over it looked like the rail was in the water and I'd just have to leave go my hold to drop into the sea.

I don't suppose there was any real danger of the ship capsizing, because all the time she was listing the life of the big roller was working beneath her, and when its crest passed by she began to right herself. But she didn't come back to even keel by a long shot; there was a heavy and permanent list to starboard, and the big seas marched up and flung themselves against us with terrible bangs, and the well decks, I knew without seeing, must be runnin' green water.

Well, that first long roll of the ship rolled the fight plumb out of the Chinks. It was terrifying, and as she kept going over and over and farther over, a long, loud howl rose from the different parts o' the deck where they were bunched and hanging on. It certainly looked and sounded like the end o' the world, and I guess the poor devils thought it was.

The feller I had dropped with my last shot rolled down into the scuppers as she listed, and when the rail went below water he disappeared. Right when she was layin' over the farthest, the moon came out from behind the cloud bank and shone down on us. It lighted up the whole deck suddenly, and all the waste o' water beneath us; and I could see the whole gang o' coolies hangin' on to T-beams and angle-irons and stanchions at the for'ard end o' the bridge deck.

It looked like the funnel would topple over on me, so I got a toe hold on the deck and let go the guy rope and jumped for the door o' the fiddley, which was just a few feet away. The door was closed, but I managed to catch hold of the iron ring which acts as door-knob on such doors, and there I hung in a more safe and comfortable position than the one I had left. The ship was beginning to right herself, and I was thinking to myself that maybe I wouldn't shake hands with Davy Jones after all.

* * *

WELL, my shift o' position had turned me about so that when I looked up from my hand-hold I was looking aft instead o' for'ard. The first thing I seen in this direction was Marie and Prince Mike, both hanging on to the door to the engine-room. The next thing I seen was something white and awful-lookin' crawling up-deck out o' the scuppers, and I says to myself—

"My ——, what's this?"

Then the ship righted herself as much as she was going to, and the awful-lookin' thing stood up, and it was only the poor old Princess Stepanover.

As I afterward found out, what had happened to her was this: When the ship give the big roll, the weight o' her body yanked her head out of the port-hole, and she went flyin' down to leeward. Marie tried to grab her, but was only able to catch hold of her dressin'-gown, which came away in her hand. The poor old girl hit the bulwarks, and clung there, under water, until the worst was over.

Just having lost her dressin'-gown left the princess clad sort o' skimpy, so to speak; and I'm making particular mention of it with all due respect to the lady, and only because of the effect her appearance had on that gang o' heathens for'ard. She only had on her night-gown, which was white and floppy, and made her look most horrible ghostly.

I ain't a superstitious guy, but the sight o' her sent the cold shivers through me. She stood there with her bare arms over her head, lookin' up at the moon, and the wind billowed her dress about her until it looked more like swirlin' vapor than white cloth. You can imagine how the sight o' her affected them coolies, who was scared to death o' her anyway. No real witch could have looked half as awful.

Then she opened her mouth and shrieked. My ——, it was a sound to grate a body's teeth; I never heard a better shriek even in a theater. It cut through the crashin' and bangin' and the Chinks' wail like a knife through butter. And then, before the sound had died away on the wind, she began to laugh the craziest, shriekiest kind o' laughter a feller ever heard.

Well, it was plain to me that the fright and shock had taken the poor woman's wits, and she had gone into a fit o' hysterics. But of course that wasn't plain to the Chinamen, who looked on her as a powerful bad joss. And when she started on a staggerin' run for'ard, over the slippery, heaving deck, tossin' her arms in the air and letting out peal on peal of that blood-freezin' laughter, I guess there wasn't a yellow boy in all that attackin' party who would have give a copper cash for his chances.

One and all, they let out a howl of pure terror the minute the princess started toward them, and one and all they let go of whatever they was holding on to and bunched together at the head of the ladder leading down to the fore deck. Seeing the way they was taking it, I didn't try to grab the princess when she went by me; instead, I fell into her wake, and I motioned to Prince Mike to come along too. Well, just as soon as that crowd seen she was really headed for them—at least they thought she was, although the poor old girl was loony and didn't know where she was going—they cleared off of that deck so fast one could hardly see them going. The whole lot of them went, diving down the ladders and jumping the rail, and ran howlin' and wailin' for'ard into the fo'csle, which was the only place on the ship where they felt half-way safe from that awful evil eye. There wasn't one o' them made a show of fight, or standing ground, which was surprizin', seeing that this witch they was runnin' away from was the same party they had come aft to dump into the sea. But I discovered subsequent that the bosun, who was their leader and the only one among them with any guts, was the feller I had dropped with my shot.

But I didn't stop to wonder about their running in panic. I seen they were in earnest, and I also seen that there was a chance for me to do something that Galt and I would have done long before if there had been a chance of our succeeding without getting knifed, which there wasn't. The princess had begun to run up and down the for'ard end of the bridge deck, still screechin' and laughing, and I grabbed Marie by the arm and shouted into her ear—

"Keep her hollerin' till we get back!" Then I called out to Mike to follow me and lit out for the fo'csle after the Chinks.

They had all got inside and shut the door of the fo'csle alleyway against pursuit. I guess they hoped that maybe the witch couldn't come through an iron door. Anyway, the closed door was just what I expected and wanted, and I intended to fix it so it would stay closed.

It opened outward, and to port, and it had an iron ring doing service as door-knob, like all the other iron doors on the ship. The coolies had fastened it from within, and we could hear them wailin' and chatterin'; but that was all right, because I didn't want them to open it while I was working outside. I told Mike to stand by and be ready to shoot if they tried to come out.

Then, having sized up the job, I ducked into the bosun's locker, which was just a few feet to starboard of the fo'csle entrance, and fished around in there until I laid hold of a piece of five-eighth-inch wire rope which had been used and had the stretch taken out of it. This rope I rove through the ring in the fo'csle door and also through the ring in the door o' the bosun's locker, and when I had drawn it taut and put a reef knot in it, why, the fo'csle door might have been opened from inside a couple of inches or so, but no farther.

Then I got a handspike from the rack on the fo'csle head, and shoved the small end through the ring as far as it would go, and jammed the flat end behind the fo'csle head rail, which was made of two-inch iron pipe, and when that was done, that crowd o' Chinks was as securely locked up as if they was in some county jail in God's country.

Well, we was safe from the mutineers, for the time being anyway. But we didn't have no time for a breathin'-spell. Marie was singing out for help, and Mike and I had to hustle aft as quick as we had hustled for'ard. When we reached Marie we discovered the next job was to capture the princess.

While I was busy at the fo'csle door, I noticed that the princess had stopped her laughin' and taken to screechin' again, and I was thankful she kept up the racket because it prevented the Chinks interfering with the job. Now I saw what had happened to change her tune.

* * *

IT SEEMED the poor old girl had taken into her head the thought that the safest place for her was up on the bridge. So what does she do but break away from Marie and swarm up on the weather rail—which was slanting toward her on account of the ship's list—and when she got there she reached up and jumped and caught hold of the edge of the deck above. But she wasn't strong enough to draw herself up, and there she hung, shriekin' for help from the bottom o' her lungs and kicking out with her feet when a body did try to help her.

Well, it was a mighty ticklish position for her to be in, because whenever a sea hit the hull the old box plunged and rolled and shook, and the spray come up and drenched everything and everybody, and any second she might be shook loose from her hand-hold and go rolling and bouncing down the side o' the ship into the sea.

I rushed up and tried to grab her legs, and she kicked me in the face, and I was knocked flat like a ton of bricks had fell on me. Prince Mike got it next, and he went whirling half-way down the deck until he fetched up with a bang against a stanchion. I tried again, and was more careful; I jumped and caught her about the waist, and threw myself backward.

That brought her all right. We rolled and slid clear across the deck, all the way down to the lee side. I reckon I saved her life, and to show how grateful she was she began to fight me like a wildcat, and clawed my face and then fastened her hands in my hair, which ain't thin, and gave her good fistsful.

I got to my feet as soon as I could, and dragged her up by the hair—my hair, not hers—and, Mike lending me a hand, we soon got her hands untangled from my head, and her arms held. Then we moved her toward a safe place, which, of course, was the saloon, where our hospital was, and which we had to attend to. The princess fought us every inch o' the way, and if ever you hear a feller telling how dainty a princess is, you just refer him to me, because this princess had feet like batterin'-rams and was muscled like Jack Dempsey, and if Kolchak had only had sense enough to let the Russian princesses do the fightin' he never would have got licked.

But she was a weak woman after all, and proved it by faintin' dead away just the minute we reached the door to the saloon. Not that I held it against her; it was a blessing to us, and the sight that made her keel over was a bad shock to all of us. It was the body o' poor Mr. Thompson, the mate, in the doorway, lying half over the water guard, and he had been hacked and stabbed to death. The poor feller must have got up from his sick-bed to join in the fight and met the Chinks' knives at the door. I'll say this for Thompson—he was an awful fool, but good-hearted and game to the core, which is usually the case with Britishers, I've noticed.

We looked into the room, and it didn't look like a hospital no more. The beds were all empty. The sick mess-boy was gone—since he didn't show up afterward, we knew he had joined his countrymen and gone for'ard with them—the steward had disappeared, and the skipper, who had been bunked down on the saloon table, had been rolled off it when the ship gave the big roll and was lyin' on the floor against the starboard wall.

As soon as Marie seen the captain she gave a little cry and jumped right over Thompson and ran to his side. She called to us for help, for Chitpole was too big for her to lift. Yes, sir, she went right to work; there wasn't any fainting for little Marie. I guess being a nurse in the war had got her used to the sight o' blood and dead men, and anyway, she was true blue and ace high.

So me and Mike packed the princess to the divan and put her down gently and covered her with Thompson's blankets, and then gave Marie a hand to place the skipper back on the table. I thought he was dead too from the way he lay limp, but she said no, only the fall had broke open his wound and she would have to dress it in a hurry to save him.

The steward made his appearance when he heard us talking. He had been hidin' in the pantry, in the flour bin, and he was a sight to be seen. But we wasn't in any laughing humor. I ordered him to help Marie, and then I called Prince Mike, and after we had laid Thompson outside we went searching about the deck with an electric torch, looking for Galt and anything else we might find.

We didn't find Galt. I didn't hardly expect we would, after Mike told me how he had disappeared under a pile o' stabbin' Chinks. We found his cap in the starboard scuppers, but Galt, I guess, had been washed over the side—just like the bosun—when the ship listed and the sea came on board. We didn't find any dead or wounded Chinks, either, although I knew there must have been some. I guess all those that couldn't walk went the same way, into the sea.

The steam hose we had counted so much on was trailin' over the deck, and the valve on the winch-line was wide open. But no steam was coming out. Mike swore in all his languages and said the thing wouldn't work, and Galt had lost time fiddlin' with it, which was the reason the Chinks overcome them so quick. I knew what was wrong. That ——-minded bosun had shut off the steam from the winch-line down below, after he knocked the third on the head. So of course it wouldn't work when Galt tried it, and so the crazy yellow devils got him, and would have got Prince Mike and the women, and me too, if I hadn't dropped the bosun, and if the ship hadn't rolled and the princess got hysterics just at the right moment.

After having looked all about and poked into the dark corners which would be likely places for stray Chinks to hide, and not finding any, and after having put poor Thompson into an empty berth until we had time to give him decent disposal, we went up on the bridge and loosed the quartermaster from the wheel, where he wasn't doing no good since the ship didn't have steerage way. The poor feller was most dead of fright and exposure, and after I'd given him a shot o' the skipper's whisky to sort o' thaw him out, we shut him up in the spud locker, where he'd be when we wanted him. The other quartermaster that Galt had locked in the chart-house had busted out and joined his gang.

Then I told the general to keep a sharp lookout on deck while I went below and straightened things out down there. It was high time I did, because the lights were dimming, and with Marie workin' on a wounded man, it was no time for them to go out.

I found things lookin' just the same in the engine-room. This sort of surprized me, because although it was just a few minutes really since I had run up the ladder, so many things had happened that it seemed like hours had passed and that somehow things should look different. The only change was that the steam had dropped some more, and Lindsay had rolled with the list from where I left him until he come to a stop against the oil-guard in front of the high-pressure crank-pit. He was still unconscious, and breathing steady and heavy. I left him where he lay while I attended to the more important job.

The first thing I did was shut down all the auxiliary machinery except the dynamo, so as to save power, for I knew it was hopeless to try and get the ship under way again that night, and what was the use anyway? Then I hustled out into the stokehold, and there I banked the fires under one boiler and stoked them up extra heavy under the other, and when that was done I knew I'd have plenty of steam, without further stokin', for a couple of hours.

I also turned the steam on the winch-line again, for, although I knew I had the crew bottled up safe, and even if they could get out they was too scared and chicken-livered to do anything, still I wanted to play safe. When I was finished I carried Lindsay up on deck.

VIII

WHEN I lugged Lindsay into the saloon, I found that short as was the time I had been away, the little Marie had already got her hospital runnin' again all shipshape and Bristol fashion. She had the skipper all trussed up and his bed on the table wedged so he couldn't roll off again, and she was just beddin' down the princess on the divan. But as soon as she seen my load she left the old girl and started right in on her new patient. No words wasted in exclaimin' or talkin'; just to work right off the bat like a regular doctor in a regular hospital; that was the little Marie!

We placed the third on the table, beside the captain, where she could get at him easy, and when she looked at his wound she shook her own head sorrowful and says she could do nothing but keep the hurt clean, and that Lindsay seemed to have a cracked skull and needed an operation. So I thought Lindsay's chances was pretty slim.

It hit me pretty hard, because I had been hoping and figuring that Lindsay wasn't hurt bad, and I'd been sort o' counting on his help. I'd been hit on the head at different times with hammers and shovels and no end o' wrenches, and they never hurt me beyond laying me cold for a couple o' hours. But then Lindsay was a sort o' soft guy anyway.

Marie needed a hand to pass the bandage, and since the steward wasn't so clumsy at that job as me I took the hot drink he was carrying to the princess and sent him to the table. I was glad to see the princess had come out of her trance, and out o' her fit, too; I never had anything against the old girl except that she was bad luck and a nuisance. I give her the hot toddy and noticed she had dry clothes on, and asked her how she felt now.

She shook her head, and looked mournful in my general direction, and says in French —because she couldn't speak English like Marie and Prince Mike—she says, did I think they'd come after her again? And I says I didn't think so, and if they did, why, I'd shoot her with my own hand before I'd let her fall in their clutches; and bless me if her eyes didn't begin to roll, and she'd have begun to screech if I hadn't accidental-like popped the corner o' a cushion into her mouth.

She was the most unreasonable, ungrateful body I ever had anything to do with, and seein' I excited her, I went out on deck to see what Mike was up to.

I found he wasn't up to anything. In fact, he was sitting down to it. He was squatted on the bitts, on the port side, and every time a sea hit the side of the ship he'd be drenched with spray; then he would moan a little to show he had a powerful misery, but he didn't care enough to get up and out o' there. The trouble was that with the excitement past, his seasickness had come back on him; and besides, being a prince and general, he wasn't used to cold, wet nights at sea, and I guess a little hardship seemed worse to him than it did to me.

I hauled him to his feet and told him to go to his room and get into some dry clothes. Then I says if he still felt bad he should lie down. I could have cured him right then, o' course, by giving him a hard graft job, but I was already figuring on using him tomorrow, and I wanted to save his strength.

So, having fixed up Mike, I borrowed an overcoat from him and began to walk up and down in the lee o' the house, figurin' out what I would do now. The way things looked on board the *Sea Witch* didn't make me feel very cheerful, and the more I thought and figured, the worse the situation seemed, and the gloomier I got.

It was strictly up to me to get the ship out o' the fix she was in; I knew that. I couldn't count on Lindsay for help. I couldn't count on the skipper. Poor Galt, the best man o' the lot, was gone. In fact, I couldn't count on anybody o' the male denomination except a broken-down prince, who wasn't much use anyway you sized him up, and one lone coolie who knew how to steer the ship, but who might be dead o' his terror by morning.

When it come to considerin' the female denomination, why, things looked better. Of course the poor old flower o' the aristocracy couldn't be looked upon as a help—unless scarin' Chinks half to death was considered, and the need for that had passed. But there was Marie! She wasn't no Jonah; just thinking o' her was a help.

When I thought of the fix the ship was in, I couldn't help but feel blue, and think that a wet corner in Davy Jones' locker was all ready and waiting for us; but when I thought o' the little Marie, I says to myself—

"No, sir, Billy Murray, you ain't going to let no harm come to that little girl!"

It was the thought o' Marie that kept my backbone stiff.

I'll say I needed a stiff backbone. Just figure out what I was up against. For the time being, the ship was a derelict, at the mercy o' wind and wave. Maybe, by and by, with Mike's help, I could get way on her again. But what then? I might talk fresh and bluff other people but I couldn't bluff myself.

What was I, after all, but a common workin' stiff, a hard graft guy without no education, a feller with a strong back and a weak mind. I couldn't navigate a ship anywhere; I couldn't even steer one; I wasn't any kind of a bridge ornament at all. So far as the power plant went, I could start and stop the engines and get steam. The only work I was really good at was shoveling coal and runnin' winches.

I had a five-thousand-ton ship on my hands. I couldn't ask the skipper what to do, because he was delirious o' fever that was due to his wound, and maybe to the flu as well. The mate was waitin' to be buried. The second mate was gone without buryin'. Two o' the engineers had shook hands with Davy Jones; the third was laid up unconscious with a cracked head. The crew was half o' them sick or dead, and the other half in open, murderous mutiny, and all o' them, well and sick, locked up together. They couldn't cause no more trouble for the time being, but they couldn't be made to work ship either.

Old Man Trouble had made a clean sweep o' that ship, all in a single day's time, and I, the poor donkeyman, was the only guy left to spar with him. I ain't saying I wasn't the best o' the boilin' and the proper one to be spared; but Old Man Trouble certainly give me a man-sized job to handle.

The job seemed so big that when I thought of it that way I'd say to myself—

"Poor fish, you can't do it."

Then I'd think o' Marie, busying herself so calm and cool and cheerful inside the cabin, and I'd say—

"You big stiff, you *got* to do it!"

And when I'd say that, I'd feel that I could do it, too. I'd feel like me and Marie could take that ship all the way to Frisco.

* * *

THE chronometer in the chart-house struck eight bells midnight, and just as I was thinking what a mournful long time it was till daylight, Marie came out on deck and joined me. Things took a cheerful color right away, and I'll remember the rest o' that night as about the happiest time in my life.

She had bundled up warm in an elegant fur coat that, I guess, she must have borrowed from the princess. She fell into step with me, and, not havin' sea-legs to mention, why, what does she do but slip her little arm through mine and hold on to me as natural as could be. It made me feel good, the trustin' way she done it.

She tells me that her patients were quiet, and her companion was sleepin' like a babe, and she has taken the chance to step outside for fresh air, and for a talk with me. She says she knows they all owe their lives to my quick wits and bravery and my unceasin' wigilance, and she must thank me for herself and her companions, who wasn't in any state o' mind to be able to thank me themselves. And she wanted to know what would happen next.

"I thought I had left bloodshed and horrors behind, in the unhappy country I flee from," says she. "But no; even on the ocean there is no peace for me."

There was a sadness in her voice, and a tired slump to her little shoulders when she said this; though she got hold of her nerve right away, and the next thing she said was to ask my pardon for bein' gloomy. But what she had said kind o' opened my eyes, and made me feel like fightin' and cryin' at the same time.

I was ashamed of myself because I had been moonin' around like a sick calf, feeling sorry for myself, when I ought to have been feelin' sorry for Marie. If the mess we was in made me feel bad—me, a roughneck who was used to bad messes—how must it make this poor little girl feel? I had been thinking o' Marie as a help to me, when I should have been thinking o' her as some one I should help.

The poor, lonesome little kid! I felt like takin' her in my arms and kissin' away all her horrors and fears. But I didn't quite have nerve enough to do that just yet, so I did the next best thing; I started in to talk bright and cheerful and put the best face on everything.

Well, I ain't no slouch of a liar when I put myself to it, and this time I done myself proud, as the sayin' is. Accordin' to me, every speck o' danger was past, and there wasn't a safer or more comfortable ship on the Pacific than the old wreck under our feet. The gale was blown out and the sea was going down, so I made the most o' that. We was in about the loneliest stretch o' water in the world; but I didn't tell her so.

I said we was likely to sight a ship 'most any minute, which was the reason I had the side-lights and mast-head lights burnin'; and that even if we didn't sight a passin' ship we was bound to be picked up by a searchin'-party, because Galt had sent out a wireless call; and I didn't explain to her that Galt couldn't give any position when he sent the call, and he didn't know whether anybody had picked it up or not.

Then, just to clinch matters, and make sure she'd feel at ease, I says that it didn't matter much if we weren't picked up, because tomorrow I would get way on the ship and stand in for the coast, and in a day or so we would be back in port. I didn't give her any details, and I talked so fast she didn't have a chance to ask for any.

She was as pleased and relieved as could be, and, after payin' a visit to her patients and finding them o. k., she says she would keep me company for a while longer if I didn't mind. I'll say I didn't mind! I got a couple o' armchairs, and we settled ourselves in a spot where we was sheltered and where I could still keep an eye on the fore deck, and the first thing I knew, I had her warm little hand in mine, and I had stopped tellin' lies about the ship, and was talkin' about myself and tellin' pretty near the whole truth.

That was the sort o' girl Marie was; she could make you talk about yourself. Now I sat down with the intention of finding out all about her, because I had already decided she was the little bit o' muslin I wanted to cook my breakfast for the rest o' my life, and I was feeling for the best way to tell her so.

But before I got a chance to find out all about her, why, she put a question here and a question there, and listened so sympathetic-like that first thing I knew I was spinnin' the yarn o' my life and voyages, and only leavin' out the times I was in love and in jail, because, o' course, I didn't want to frighten her off.

She was interested too, and said I was a great knight-erring, which I took as a good sign. That's when I got hold o' her hand, and began to give her the real low-down on myself.

"*Cherry*, my dear, I don't have to stay an ocean hobo all my life," I says. "I can get a job ashore, workin' in a stationary plant, or maybe firin' on a railroad, and, what's more, I can draw down a pay-check fat enough to take care o' two people."

"Oh, *la, la*," says she, and giggles a bit; so I thought everything was all right.

"Marie, darlin', you ain't got no kind of a white man's job," I says. "So when we get to port," says I, "you just tell that old dame she can get a Jap or a nigger to wait on her, and after that you and me will hunt up a sky-pilot, and then we'll light out for God's country. I'll work hard and keep sober," I says, "and we'll die rich, ownin' our own home."

For a minute she didn't answer me; just sat there holding her head down and hidin' her face. But she didn't draw her hand away, so I wasn't worried. When she did speak, her voice was quiverin' and low.

"You really love your leetle Marie?" she says. "You will love her always?"

"Till —— freezes over!" I says, in a deep and solemn voice. She lifted her head at that. It got her, like I figured it would.

"Oh, you splendid Meester Donkey!" says she, and she jumped up and threw her arms around my neck, and bless my soul if she didn't kiss me right on the mouth.

Yes, sir, them Latins are wicious lovers when they get started! Then she jumped away from me, before I could lay hands on her, and scooted into the saloon. When I followed her, I found her bending over the skipper, just as busy as she could be; and she looked up and put a finger to her lips to tell me I wasn't to make a noise.

I understood her. The dear little kid had showed me how she felt, and now she wanted to be alone for a while. So I didn't try to get gay. I says—

"Well, Marie, you can think o' yourself as Mrs. William Murray as much as you like."

And I blew her a kiss and went back on deck.

Say, the rest o' that night flew by without my hardly noticin' it. I walked on air, and the Chinks and the ship and nothin' in the world bothered me a bit. I just knew, without thinkin' anything about it, that I'd save the ship and all hands somehow or other. I couldn't lose with Marie at my back.

IX

THE dawn broke in a clear sky, and the sea had done down until it wasn't dangerous no more, and it was fair weather again like poor Galt had said it would be. That sun made everything look rosy, and when I come up from below—where I had been on one o' my regular trips to look after the boilers—and saw it shining just above the rim of the sea, why, I forgot all about how tired I was and skipped along the deck like a two-year-old. I felt there was nothin' to it; nothin' at all. I felt I could skipper and man a Western Ocean liner, let alone a broken down old scow like the *Sea Witch*.

Marie called me into the pantry, and I found she had brewed a fresh pot o' coffee and made some sandwiches. There was lots o' canned and package stuff in the pantry, so we never had any trouble throwing together a meal. While I was refreshin' myself, Marie told me that the steward, who was her chief cook and bottle-washer and general handy man, had developed a cold and fever, and she had made him lie down on the bed the mess-boy had deserted. She said she figured it was the flu.

I was worried. Not about the steward, but about Marie herself. She looked so tired. I urged her to lie down also and snatch forty winks; otherwise she'd be likely to get the flu too, and then what would become o' her hospital? She says she couldn't catch it, because both she and her companions has had it, not six months before.

Well, that news took a load off my mind; but I kept urgin' her to rest, pointin' out that now while her patients were quiet was her chance, and she might have another night on her feet. So, by and by, she agreed; that is, she wouldn't go to bed and sleep, like I wanted, but she lay down on the divan and rested with her eyes open. I suggested she roll out the princess, who had had a good sleep, and put her to work. But Marie says no; the princess was a poor woman of much nervousness, who was best off in bed.

Not gettin' my way where the princess was concerned, I went right out on deck and woke up Prince Mike.

"Maybe I can't get any good out o' the old girl," says I, to myself, "but this other bird is my meat. I've got a nice job for him, and he's goin' to work for his keep this day, prince or no prince."

But, bless me, I didn't have any trouble with Mike. He had turned in, standin', and as soon as I opened the door o' his room and breezed in, he was on his feet, ready to fight. I'll say this for Mike; maybe he didn't belong to the fightin' branch, but he should have because he had lots o' spunk.

He was still a bit wabbly on his pins, but since the ship had got steadier, so had his stomach. I dosed him with coffee and grub, and he took both, and I guess that was all that was the matter with him, seeing he hadn't eaten since he come on board.

"Mike, your Highness, what did you ever do for a livin'?" I asks him.

He didn't savvy me at first. I says I

wanted to know if he ever had a regular job in his life. He got that. He drew himself up and says proud and haughty that he was an *ah-de-coop* to his Czar.

"Good enough," says I. "You're promoted," I says, "and today you'll be an *ah-de-coop* to a scoop shovel."

Well, he didn't like that very well, because he thought I was makin' fun o' his sacred memories, or somethin' like that, and he began to scowl and splutter. But I quieted him. I told him that him and me had a common aim in life; he had to look out for the princess, and I had to look out for Marie; and to be successful we had to work together. That meant, I says, that he must do what I ordered, because I knew something about ships and he didn't.

He stopped being mad at once. He was just as mercury in his feelin's as a woman. He patted me on the shoulder, and says I am their brave savior, and he was sorry he ever called me a *Can-I*, and even if I was one, he would forget himself and do just what I said, or words to that effect. And considerin' Mike's bringin'-up, I thought this was pretty handsome of him.

The next thing I did was to take Mike with me, and we got the Chink quartermaster out o' the spud locker, and fed him, and made him fast to the wheel again. He was a mighty meek and sickly specimen o' Chinaman, but he hadn't caught the flu yet, and I figured maybe he would stand the gaff. I ordered him that when he felt life in the wheel he was to put the ship on a sou'east course and hold her there.

That's what I intended to do—get way on the ship and stand in for the coast. We seemed to be in very empty waters where we was, and it stood to reason the closer inshore we got the sooner we'd meet ships and get help. Of course, I didn't know how far offshore we were, but I figured roughly that the *Sea Witch* had steamed and drifted perhaps two hundred miles since leavin' the straits. I didn't know if layin' her to a sou'east course would fetch us into the track o' Hakodate traffic but it was the best guess I could make, and anyway Japan would be ahead o' us.

So after hoistin' the English jack upside-down as a distress signal, and leavin' strict orders with the quartermaster to pull the whistle-cord—which I left in his reach—at the first hint o' smoke on the horizon, Mike and I went below.

It was quite safe for both of us to leave the deck, because the helmsman was ironed, and we had looked at the fo'csle door and knew there wasn't a chance o' the crew bustin' out. In fact they never tried to break out; there wasn't that much spirit left in them. I was powerful sorry for them, for I knew the fo'csle must be an awful place by now, but I didn't dare do anything but strengthen the barricade against the door.

Down in the fire-room I introduced Mike to hard work. It was pretty tough on the poor feller, but I'll say he was willin', if clumsy; and at that, it wasn't as hard on him as it was on me, because I had the hardest job. What Mike did was strip to the buff and trim coal, and what I did was strip to the same and clean fires.

They had to be cleaned if they were to make steam enough, with one man firing, to run the engines. Well, maybe you don't know it, but cleanin' fires under a marine boiler is about the hottest, hardest job that was ever invented. It takes sap out of a feller that he doesn't get back until he's had a good sleep. I hadn't had a sleep for twenty-four hours, and after what I'd gone through I was pretty tired to begin with; but I cleaned all six fires, and when I was done, why, my stern was hittin' the deck, as the saying is. I spread the new fires and put Mike to work stokin' them up.

When it comes to having a prince as a steam-getter, why, I would rather have anybody else. Mike was willin', and he done as noble as he could, but he didn't have the makings of a fireman in him. I soon saw he wasn't going to be as much of a help as I hoped he would be.

Now you would have thought, him being such a clever hand with a sword, that he could have aimed a scoop full o' coal at a two-foot hole and hit it once in a while. So he could—about once in seven. And when it came to slicin' the fires—the man would stand in front o' an open furnace until his whiskers sizzled, grunting and swearing and makin' no headway at all.

So I had to do the hardest work myself, and keep him trimmin' coal chiefly. Poor Mike, he'd have burnt himself out in the first hour if I hadn't thought to bring a bottle o' the skipper's whisky from the chart-house. That kept the cramps away and him in a good humor.

Well, with clean fires, I had a head o' steam in no time, and I started up the plant, and warmed up the engines, and pretty soon I had them turnin' over half-speed ahead. Then, after oilin' around, and locking the throttle, I skipped up on deck to see if the Chink had minded what I told him.

He had. At least he did the best that was in him, which wasn't very much. But the list the ship had made her very cranky to steer, and besides, I suppose not havin' a mate on the bridge to oversee him made the poor feller nervous. But he had the vessel on her course, or at least headed in the general direction o' the course, and even if our wake did look like a big white snake, why, we was makin' progress and going away from there. So I told him I'd skin him alive if he didn't mind his work and keep a sharp lookout, and went back to the engine-room.

WELL, the rest o' that day will always be like a sort o' dream in my mind. I was that tired, you see, that everything looked a bit strange, like a dream. I just dragged my feet around like they was a couple o' lumps o' lead. But I had to keep going in order to keep the ship going.

I spent the time between the engine-room and the bridge and stokehold. I had to keep the machinery oiled up and runnin' smooth, and I had to keep an eye on the helm, and I had to help Mike. He done his best, and there was a carpet o' coal a foot deep all over the fire-room floor-plates which come from the coal he'd aimed at the fires and missed. And even with all this lost motion, he did keep the fires coaled up after a fashion.

But he couldn't place a scoopful in the back o' a furnace to save his life, and the result was that he'd bank each fire with a horrible big Liverpool front, and every little while, when the marker began to drop, I'd have to hustle out there and break these fronts and spread the fires and slice them up—a hard, exhaustin' job at the best o' times.

But Mike done the best he could. If you ever have a hot job to be done, and nobody but a prince to do it, just liquor him up. That's the way I kept Mike at it. I was afraid to take a sniff o' the stuff myself, because o' course I had to keep cold sober no matter how tired I got, but I let Mike have as much o' the skipper's Scotch as he wanted because it was the only thing I knew of that would keep his muscles limber and the cramps away from his stomach.

Mike wanted a lot of it. He got away with a couple o' quarts first and last. I guess his workin' so hard and sweating so free accounted in part for his being able to do it; but I guess, too, that he was sort o' a tank by nature. It wasn't until along in the afternoon that he began to sing Russian war-songs, which sounded like Indian war-whoops, and to dance the Cossack dance for me, which is a step I wouldn't recommend for anybody what isn't double-jointed.

But he was soon cured o' wasting time dancing, for he fell into the bilges between the boilers, and sat down on the bottom-blow, which was hot, and being, as I've said, a man o' prominence around his middle, why, he was wedged there and bellered like a bull until I hauled him out. Then he fell on my neck and kissed the top o' my head, and says to me in French that I was his amiable little bed-bug. I put up with it. I was willin' to put up with most anything so long as he shoveled coal, which he did. But I guess that when Mike's at home he's one o' these gay old dogs who likes to sneak out with the boys when Mrs. Princess ain't lookin'.

So that's the way the *Sea Witch* limped out o' her difficulties, with a half-dead coolie at her helm and a half-dead donkeyman at her throttle, and here and there and everywhere besides, and a rip-roarin', prancing prince o' Russia stokin' up her fires. I guess maybe a rummier crew never handled a ship since the days o' Noah's Ark. Be that as it may, the three o' us—and that means chiefly me, o' course—steamed that old wagon out of trouble.

Along about six bells in the afternoon watch—three o'clock, that is—I was fillin' up the oil-cups on the thrust block, when the whistle blew. Well, my oil-can went one way, and I went the other way—up the ladder and out on deck just as fast as my feet would carry me. There was Marie and the princess dancing up and down and wavin' their hands, and there was the Chink doing a one-legged jig all by himself, and hauling down on the whistle-cord like his life depended on it, which maybe it did, and there was a ship in plain view a couple o' miles off our port beam and headed toward us.

She was so close the Chink must have been napping not to have noticed her before he did, which ain't to be wondered at considering he had been shackled to his job since shortly after daylight.

But I didn't feel like blaming him then. I whooped it up like the rest, and since the princess was handiest, I grabbed her and waltzed her half a dozen turns on my way forward, which took all the old girl's breath and nigh scandalized her to death. A lot I cared about princesses that minute.

"Get ready for the honeymoon, kid!" I sings out to Marie, and I ran into the chart-house and grabbed a pair o' glasses, and brought them to bear on the stranger.

It was a man-o'-war, a Jap gunboat, and I could tell from the fact he was gettin' a boat ready to launch that he was going to pay us a visit. Indeed, we was such an awful-looking old wreck, with our list and all, that I guess any passing ship would have investigated us, even if we hadn't shown distress signals.

Well, the others might keep on dancing for joy, but I had work to do. The Jap was coming up at a great clip and I knew he'd have his boat over in a few minutes, so I hustled down below and stopped the engines. Then I had to get a Jacob's ladder over the side; and after that I had my hands full, persuadin' Prince Mike not to dive over the side and swim to meet the rescuin' party.

It was a trim little motor launch, carrying a young lieutenant and a party o' marines, that chugged around our stern and caught the lines I threw. A minute later the officer and the marines were on our deck.

Well, I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd feel like huggin' a gang o' Japs. But that's just the way I felt, I was so glad to see them fellows. And what I felt, Prince Mike didn't make no bones about doing. I guess that boardin'-party must have thought at first that they was in a lunatic asylum, for there was the princess almost throwing another fit, wringing her hands and rollin' her bad eyes, and crying and laughing by turns, and there was Mike, all black and shiny with coal dust and sweat, and with half his whiskers singed off, vamping each one o' the little fellers in turn, and there was me, looking pretty near as tough, yelling at the officer so he could hear me above the confounded racket. The only respectable-looking one in our party was Marie, and she kept quiet in the background.

The Jap officer was a clever little man who could talk English like a college graduate and savvy a thing the minute he heard it. I got him aside and in a breath I told him what was wrong with us—flu and mutiny. In another breath I told him who our passengers were. Well, that news changed his manner something wonderful; he went right over and let Mike kiss him again, and the way he bowed to the ladies you'd have thought he'd break himself in two. Then he snapped some orders at his men and one o' them went up on the bridge and wig-wagged talk to the gunboat. The officer had a look about, and stationed men at the fo'csle, and saw the sick, and poor Mr. Thompson layin' dead in his room, and had a talk with Marie and the princess.

THEN he come up to me and says that a crew and a doctor would come on board and take the *Sea Witch* into Hakodate, and that he would send Captain Chitpole and Mr. Lindsay to his ship, where they would get expert attention and be sooner in a hospital, and, finally, our illustrious passengers have asked to be transferred also, and his captain has agreed. I had better stay with the ship, he says, and show the new crew around.

As soon as he told me that, I went to Marie, and I says to her, "*Cherry*, you're going to leave me?"

She looked at me and there were tears in her eyes. Yes, sir, and she took my dirty paw in both her little hands, and squeezed it, and she says—

"Oh, my dear donkey, I am so sorry; but I must go with my companions."

"That's all right," says I. "I'm glad of it, because you'll be comfortable on board the Jap, and have nothing in sight to remind you o' what you've passed through. But," I says, "you'll get into port long ahead of me, and you don't want to lose me altogether, do you? So, when you get into port," I says, "you leave a message for me with the American consul."

Would you believe it, she began to cry! She let go my hand, and buried her face in a handkerchief; and if I hadn't seen it, I'd never have believed it o' Marie. But then, women is women, and the best o' them is weak, and when one is partin' from the man she loves, it's only right she should cry.

"Never mind, kid, it's only a day or two at the most," I says, and I'd have soothed her more effectual, only I was so dirtied with coal I didn't want to muss her up, and, anyway, she didn't give me a chance.

"I'll leave the message for you," she says, and ran into her room.

I sat down on the bunker-hatch and waited, and now I didn't have to work I found it mortal hard to keep awake. It wasn't the hours I'd been without sleep, you understand, but the work I'd done. The fires had taken all the pep out o' me. Maybe I sat there five minutes, maybe it was half an hour, but all at once the crew that was to man us come tumbling over the side, and there looked to be enough o' them to man a line o' battle-ship. Then they fetched the skipper and Lindsay out o' the saloon and lowered them over the side into a cutter, which the motor-boat was towing, and then our passengers went over the rail.

Prince-and-General Mike had washed himself and put on some clothes, and although he still had the liquor in him, as a body's nose could tell six foot away, he had become as dignified as a church. He didn't try to hug me this time; he said good-by like a factory-owner, pattin' me on the shoulder and calling me a noble lad, and saying he'd see I had my reward. The princess didn't even look at me, which was the kind o' good-by I expected from her.

But maybe the princess passed me by because I wasn't looking at her. I saved my eyes for Marie. And you bet she didn't ignore me! There I was, all dirty and forlorn, and my little *cherry* looked at me, and her big gray eyes got bigger, and she says of a sudden—

"My dear, brave boy, I am a weecked woman, I am so sorry!"

Then for the second time she kissed me, and made a quick getaway. The sight o' her doing it nearly floored that Jap officer.

A minute later that party was headed for the gunboat. Prince Mike sat up very stiff and never looked around, but the princess got human all at once and waved a handkerchief at the Jap lieutenant—or maybe at me. Marie went away with her head bowed, like she was crying, and I never took my eyes off her until she had disappeared around the stern o' the Jap ship. I felt like bawlin' myself, for some reason. But I didn't. I was too tired. I went to my room, and crawled into my bunk all dirty and dressed as I was; and I must have been asleep before I had fairly stretched out.

X

WHEN I turned out in the morning I found we were in the straits, and jogging along almost like nothing like an evil eye had ever struck the old ship. Those little brown fellers had things runnin' like clockwork, and the fo'csle was wide open and the smell o' fumigatin' hung over everything.

They had opened the fo'csle, they told me, just as soon as the doctor got on board and got his bearings. They had a file o' marines standing by with rifles in case the Chinks made trouble but the poor devils wept with delight to see them, and when they learned that the evil eye had left the ship, those that were well offered to turn to right away. But only a handful was well; they found three dead and nearly thirty sick in that awful hole.

I learned, too, how lucky we was to have been picked up by that gunboat. I guess as a navigator I'm a better donkeyman, because the course I had the ship on would never have brought us near Hakodate, though it might have beached us near Yokohama in about a week's time. We was south o' the straits, and this Jap coming up from Yokohama had fallen in with us by accident. They hadn't picked up Galt's wireless, and neither had anybody else that I ever heard of. Well, we was lucky, and I was glad, but still I bet that if the Jap hadn't fallen in with us I'd have brought her into port myself, somehow or other.

We made the harbor in the afternoon. We steamed past the gunboat, which was anchored with others o' her kind in the man-o'-war basin, and anchored ourselves in quarantine waters, with a pest flag at our peak. We also passed an outward-bound liner, as we came in. I didn't pay much attention to her, but if I had known who was on her deck maybe I wouldn't have felt so chesty.

There was a big reception party waiting for us when we dropped anchor, but the party I most wanted to see wasn't there, and I didn't hardly expect she would be. She'd be waiting ashore for me, at the consul's or in a hotel.

I waited to hear the news from the doctors that come off to take charge—that the captain would get well, and maybe Lindsay would, too, though they couldn't tell about him yet, because that morning they had sawed off the top o' his head and fitted him with a silver plate, and they didn't know how he'd take it.

There was an undertaker to take charge o' poor Thompson and give him a Christian burial, and a gang from the British consulate to look after the ship, and a government feller who wanted my statement. I dodged them all, as soon as I could, and went as passenger in the first boat ashore.

A 'rickshaw man galloped me up to the consulate. I kept worrying that maybe the place would be closed on account o' a holiday, or something, because I knew it wasn't the habit o' government fellers to work very hard. But it wasn't. The door was open, so I breezed into a room and saw a Jap clerk, and I went into another room, and there was a white man.

"Are you the consul?" says I. "Did a lady leave a message here for Mr. William Murray, o' the ship *Sea Witch?*"

The feller got up and shook my hand.

"So this is Murray," he says. "By George, I'm glad to meet you! Just come this way."

He took me into another room, and there was a feller in an army officer's uniform.

"Captain, this is that man from the *Sea Witch,*" says the first feller.

The captain shook my hand.

"Good man, fine job," says he. "By George, I'm proud to meet you! Just step this way."

He took me into another room, and there was an oldish feller with glasses sitting at another desk, and I knew by the cut o' his jib he was the man I wanted.

"Here is that gallant lad from the *Sea Witch,*" says the soldier.

So that feller got up and shook my hand, and says he is delighted to meet me, by George, and I'm a credit to the flag and the country.

Well, I was feelin' sort o' giddy by this time. "You gents are very kind, and I'm proud to shake hands with you," I says, "but what I want to know is, did a young lady leave a message here for Bill Murray?"

"I should say she did," pipes up the oldish gent—who was the consul—"and she told us about you, as well. Good work, say I."

"Where is she?" says I, comin' to the point. "That's what I want to know."

"Why, that's hard to say, exactly," says the consul. "She sailed a little over an hour ago on board the *Chosen Maru,* for Yokohama, where she and her party are to connect for San Francisco."

It was a minute before it soaked in. Then I went limp, and sat on a chair.

"Do you mean to say," I says, "that Marie—that's the young lady, not the princess—has gone and sailed away?"

"She left this package with me to deliver to you," says the consul, handing me a big yellow envelope which had my name written on it. "Perhaps," says he, "it will explain certain misunderstandings you have."

I opened the envelope, and the first thing I pulled out was a check. It was made out to me, for twenty-five hundred dollars, and it was signed by Prince-and-General Michael Smirnoff, and countersigned and certified by the American consul. It was real money, all right, and I could hardly believe my eyes.

But it wasn't a minute when I was much interested in money. I dug into the envelope again, and this time I drew out a little square photograph, with writin' on it.

It was a picture o' Marie. But not the Marie I'd known. This Marie in the picture was the grandest, most dressed-up woman I ever clapped eyes upon, with jewels hangin' all over her. The writin' across the bottom o' the picture says—

> To the bravest man and most gallant lover I have known.
>
> MARIE STEPANOVA, PRINCESS SHESBAKOFF.

I couldn't believe my eyes at first. I stared at the picture, and then at the consul, who stood there grinnin' at me like a heathen idol.

"Then the cock-eyed dame ain't the princess?" I says at last.

"You mean Marie the maid," he says. "An excellent woman, but—er—unfortunate. No, the princess is the lady whose picture you have in your hand. She asked me to express her deep gratitude to you. She desired me to inform you that she will always cherish the memory o' her friendship with you, and that her fiancé, Prince General Smirnoff——"

It was too much. I couldn't stand any more news just then. I stuck the check in my pocket like it was five cents, and put the picture away more careful, and went away from there, leavin' that consul talking like a book. He was a good guy and said he liked me, but just then I wanted to be alone.

WELL, a busted heart is a funny thing. For a couple o' days I thought I'd never take any more interest in life, and I might as well get religion or join the Army, or something. Then I began to perk up. You see, I didn't go back to the ship; I stayed ashore at a boardin'-house the British consul picked out for me, and he give orders I was to have the fat o' the land.

It was the first decent grub I'd had since shipping in the *Sea Witch*, and o' course, it helped a lot to rewive my spirits. After a week of it, the British consul give me my discharge, and a hundred pounds on account o' the owners, over and above my pay, and a second-class ticket to San Francisco, where I said I wanted to go.

I kept feeling better and better all the way across the Pacific. It wasn't that I was forgettin' Marie. Not much. But Time is the great healer, as the sayin' is, and it was already weeks behind. Besides, I'd come to the way o' thinking that a princess, after all, wouldn't be no sort o' catch for a hard-workin' man. Also, I never had so much money to spend before in my life, and it's pretty hard for a feller to keep on feeling bad when his pocketbook is full.

Well, I went ashore and banked my roll, and bought the swellest outfit o' clothes a man ever stood in, and started out to drown my sorrow complete. But it wasn't no fun. No, sir, even old Frisco is spoiled for that kind o' fun, nowadays. I found that to drown my sorrow I had to go sneakin' down alleys to blind pigs and pay four-bits a shot for jackass hooch.

I never could stand a sneakin' jag. Where's the kick in it? So I says to myself:

"Billy Murray, you been a wagabond long enough. You use this money to start up in business."

So I looked about, and next Monday I open up. "The Little Marie Doughnut & Coffee Parlor, Wm. Murray, Prop., A Swell Place for Ladies and Gents." That's the way the sign feller fixed it up, all in gold letters.

AERIAL ADVENTURE

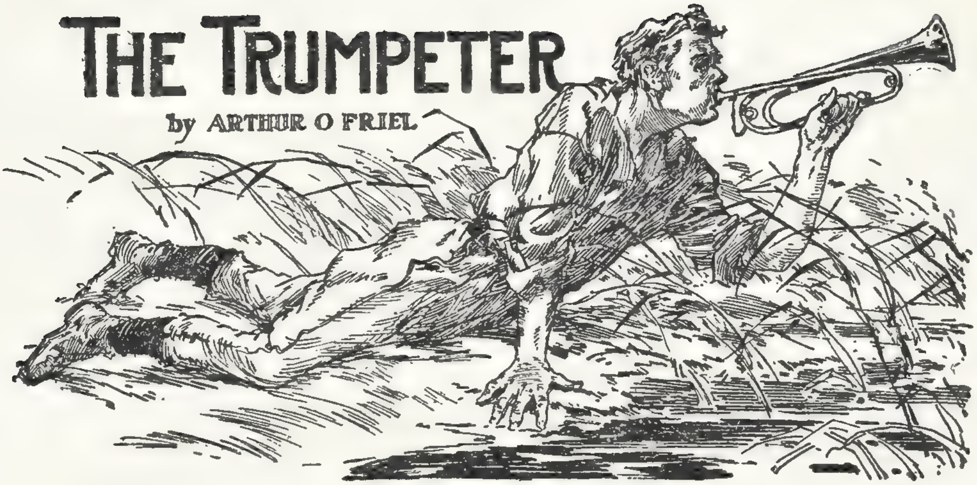
by Clarence Parker

The winds of the world blow low;
The winds of the world blow far;
The winds of the world blow strong and high where the peaks of cloudland are.

Oh, would I were zooming low—
Oh, would I were swept afar—
My fingers a-clip on the joy-stick's tip in the elements' crashing war!

THE TRUMPETER

by ARTHUR O FRIEL



Author of "Wild Women," "The Vulture," etc.

DEOS *Padre!* Hear that war-horn! Hand me your field-glasses quickly, *senhor!* Something is happening over there on the southern bank of the river, and I can not see it plainly. If it is an attack there will be rifle-shots, unless the settlers are overpowered at once. Listen!

Ah, it is nothing. Only a celebration. I can see Indians with great false heads doing a devil-dance before the house of some planter, who stands there with his woman and laughs. Probably he is their *patrao,* and has given them a holiday to keep them in good humor.

If the harsh blast of that *turê* had not struck my ear so suddenly I might have realized that it was blown only in merry-making, for the days when hordes of bloody *barbaros* attacked settlers here on the Amazon are long past. Past, I mean, on the Amazon itself. Up the great wild rivers which flow in from the south there are still plenty of savage killers, and we Brazilians who rove the unknown jungle know well what the *turê* means. It is the voice of death.

You can not blame me, then, for leaping up so suddenly just now. That jarring note made me forget for an instant that I was safe on the deck of a steamer instead of back in the wilderness of the Javary. Moreover, it is not many months since I heard the *turê* blown in deadly earnest, and I have not forgotten what followed.

Certainly, *senhor,* I will tell you the story if you care to hear it. Wait a moment until I make another cigaret. The one which I was smoking must have dropped overboard when I sprang up.

* * *

NOW this thing of which I speak came about while the waters of the great yearly flood were sweeping over the lowlands of the Javary region, where I was a rubber-worker for Coronel Nunes. As you know, there are really two floods each year here on the upper Amazon, but only one of these is the great rise. Then the water overwhelms all except the highest places, and our work in the swampy forests must stop until it drains away to the far-off ocean. And it was at this time that I met the Trumpeter.

With my comrade, Pedro Andrada, I had paddled southward through flooded channels to the upper reaches of the river Jurua. There, after escaping from a band of fighting women who had no men and were determined to make us husbands to all their tribe, we found a *furo,* or natural canal, opening out of the river toward the north. On this we started back to our own section, moving at our usual cruising speed. We were in no hurry, for we thought there would be nothing to do when we should reach our journey's end. But two days after leaving the river, as we were looking about among the half-drowned trees for a solid spot fit to sleep on that night, Pedro spoke in a tone of concern.

"Lourenço, we had best paddle a little

harder tomorrow. The *enchente* has ended and the *vasante* has set in."

As he said, the great rise had reached its height. On the trees around us were wet stains showing that it was beginning to ebb. From now on the waters would drop steadily until they were fifty feet or more below their present level. We had never traveled on this *furo* before, knew nothing of its depth ahead of us, and were not even sure that it ran all the way to the Javary region. So, though we did not worry, we knew it would be well to waste no time and take no chance of finding ourselves stranded in unknown country.

When we found firm land and went ashore to sling our hammocks I nicked a tree with my machete, making a mark just at the water-line. The next morning that mark was more than the width of my hand above the surface. And all that day, as we swung on homeward, we saw the wet stains lengthen on the big trunks towering around us and knew we were sinking toward the thick bush submerged far below. So we talked little, ate without delay, and kept going until darkness was near. When we landed again we were tired.

"A good day's work, comrade," Pedro said. "I do not know where we are, but we are nearer to the Javary than last night. It is good that the dull skies of the rainy time have gone and the sun shines steadily. Now we can tell better which way we are traveling."

"Yes," I agreed. "And now that the sunny *verao* has come we should hear birds calling more often. This country has been too still to suit me. I should like to hear the sweet song of the *realejo*—the organ-bird—or the long piping of that fifer, the *uira-mimbeu*."

Just then, as if in answer to my wish, a long clear call came floating through the forest. It died so softly that it seemed to hang in the air when we could not hear it more. As we stared at each other it came again. Three times in all it sounded, neither rising nor falling—just the one note, long and slow. Then we heard nothing further.

"That is not a fifer, and it certainly is not the *realejo*," said Pedro. "It must be a trumpeter. You have heard that bird, of course."

I nodded. I had not only heard it, but I had seen it. The trumpeter is that blackish bird which the Peruvians call *trompetero*—a creature about the size of a big hen, but with longer legs and neck. It is a fast runner but a poor flyer, and the Indians sometimes tame it. I had known one *caboclo* who kept such a bird, and when it died I carefully cut it open to see how it made its trumpeting cry. I found that its windpipe was very long, running down under the skin almost to the tail, then doubling around and rising again to the chest, where it went inside the breast-bone to the throat.

The sound which had just come to us was much like the call of that bird I had known, and yet it did not seem quite the same. If I had heard it anywhere else I should have said it was made by a man with a horn. But here in this desolate region such a thing seemed not possible, unless the man were an Indian; and a blast from an Indian trumpet would never have such smooth sweetness.

"Yes, it must be the trumpet-bird," I agreed. "If it would only stay where it is until tomorrow we might see it, for it is over to the westward. But probably we shall not even hear it again."

I was wrong. We were to hear it once more that day, and several times in the days to come.

WE BUILT a little fire, ate, got into our hammocks, and lay back smoking. Around us it was quite dim; but high up overhead, where were scattered openings in the tangled roof of branches, the sunshine still glinted. Then suddenly it was gone. Darkness swallowed everything but our tiny fire.

With the passing of the sun the distant trumpeter spoke again. And this time the sound was not one unchanging call. Slowly, sweetly, it rose and fell, going higher on each long note, quivering on the highest, and then sinking to the one on which it had begun. There it died away. And we lay there silent, *senhores*, silent with surprize, and silent with a feeling of loneliness and sadness which that strain left in our hearts.

At last Pedro spoke.

"That is no bird, Lourenço. It is no wild man of the bush, either. Then what can it be?"

"I do not know," I said. "Some things happen in the jungle which can not be explained. But listen. Perhaps it will come again."

We listened long, but heard only the

usual night sounds. After a time these noises blurred and faded into nothing. I slept.

Morning brought the trumpet-call again. While we were making our coffee we stiffened into listening. The sound was the same one we had first heard—three slow notes in the same tone. But somehow it seemed to us that this time they were weaker than before, and that in them was a note of despair.

We said no word. We only looked at each other. But we hastened our meal, rolled up our hammocks speedily, and paddled away with swift strokes. As we went we searched the jungle with sharp glances. The *furo* was leading us straight toward the place whence those sounds must have come.

After a time we halted. We had heard nothing more, nor seen anything alive. Yet we knew we must be near the spot we sought.

"It can not be a bird or a beast," said Pedro. "If it has a body it can be nothing but a man." Then, breathing deep, he roared out the call we give in our own region when approaching a house—

"O da casa!"

For a moment no answer came. We heard only the slight sucking sound of water around the tree-trunks. Then, not far away to our left, the trumpeter answered. And now the notes were not long and slow. They were quick, urgent, discordant—as if a man were blowing a horn in a frenzy of hope and fear lest we go past and leave him.

We yelled together, swung our dugout, and passed in among the trees toward the noise. Soon we found land. We called again, but no voice answered. Several small sounds came to us, though, and we stepped ashore and moved toward them.

Suddenly we stopped, staring at the ground.

A man was dragging himself along toward us. His head hung down so that we could not see his face—only a thick mass of long blond hair. He moved on both hands and one knee. The other leg dragged behind him as if useless. At each forward lift of his knee he grunted as if the movement cost him a mighty effort.

"Stop, friend," I said quietly. "We are here."

He stopped. His arms quivered under him, then suddenly bent and let him slump down. But as we dropped on our knees beside him he turned his head and, lying quiet, peered up at us. We looked into blue eyes gleaming in a tanned face overgrown with short yellow beard. The face looked drawn and pinched.

"Howdy!" he said hoarsely. "Got any grub?"

"We have plenty of food, *senhor*," Pedro said. "Have you hunger?"

"You said it. That's all I've got—hunger and a busted leg. For the love of God, slip me some eats!"

"Por amor de Deos, we will do so," smiled Pedro. "Lie still." And he arose and strode back to our canoe.

WHILE he was gone I looked the man over more deliberately. His speech and his dress—pocketed shirt, khaki breeches, knee boots, web belt and flat pistol—showed him to be American. The clothing was not so badly worn and stained as it would be if he had been long in the bush. The right leg was unbooted, and rough splints were tied to it below the knee. Glancing again at his face, I saw that his teeth were set and the sweat of pain was on his forehead.

"You have hurt that broken leg by your crawling," I said. "Why did you not lie still and let us come to you?"

"Because that would be the sensible thing to do." His voice was weak, but he grinned gamely. "I never show any sense. If I did I wouldn't be here at all. Besides, I've been on my back for a week, and I've learned what it is to be lonesome."

"What! You have been lying here a week?"

"Yep. Not here, but back in my tent."

Before we could talk more, Pedro came hurrying back with a gourd of *chibeh.* At sight of it the man tried to scramble up, but groaned and sank back. I scolded him, telling him to keep quiet. Then we fed him.

It was not until the gourd was empty that I thought to ask him how long he had been without food. He said it was three days. Then I wished we had fed him more sparingly at first. But since *chibeh* is only a mush of *farinha* and water, I decided that it would not hurt him. This proved true.

"Now if I only had a bucket of coffee and a smoke I'd be all set," said the stranger. "Got a cigaret on you, buddy?"

I quickly made a cigaret for him, and we promised him coffee as soon as we could make it. But first we decided to take him back to his tent and make him more comfortable. So, when he had finished his smoke, we lifted him as gently as possible and carried him back through the bush.

The distance was short, but the traveling was not easy, and in spite of our care we knew we must be hurting his bad leg. Yet he made no sound. Keeping his teeth locked, he stared straight upward until we brought him to his camp.

Beside a huge *itauba* tree we found his little tent. Inside this his hammock hung. On the ground lay his mosquito-net. We laid him down easily and picked up the net to drape it over him again. On the earth under the net we found a battered bugle.

"So it was this we heard, not a bird," I said, picking it up and glancing it over. "At first we thought you were a trumpeter."

He lay quiet a few minutes, his teeth still set. Then, as the pain in his leg grew easier, his jaws unlocked and he grinned in a tight-lipped way.

"I am," he said. "Been fooling with tin horns since I was a kid. Maybe it's my name that makes me that way—Horner. Folks used to call me Little Jack Horner, though my first name really is Jerome. How about that coffee, buddies?"

"You shall have it," I promised. We left him there and returned to our canoe, where we got our coffee and other things and started back.

"A brave fellow, Lourenço," said Pedro, as we neared the tent. "No fuss, no groan or whine, though he is broken and starved and has been alone with no help in sight. *Por Deos!* Look there!"

On the ground were jaguar-tracks. They were more than tracks—they made a path, showing that the beast had circled for hours around the tent. The marks seemed fresh.

"You were not alone last night, *senhor*," I said, entering the little cloth house.

"Huh? Oh, you mean the big cat. Sure, he did sentry-go around here most of the night. He wouldn't come in, so I kept still and let him prowl."

"Your tent saved your life," Pedro told him. "He could smell you, but he did not know he could force his way through these strange cloth walls. If he had——"

"If he had I'd have eaten him," Horner cut in. "Did you bring the coffee?"

We made the coffee, and we made it strong. The hot black liquid gave him new vigor. When he had swallowed all he could hold he gave a long sigh.

"Oh boy!" he said. "That's better than a bushel of that sawdust you fed me. How do you guys live on that *farinha* stuff, anyhow? It takes pork and beans or ham and eggs to put hair on a fellow's chest. Now say, while I'm feeling husky I wish you'd straighten out my leg. It feels twisted."

It was twisted. Working carefully, we reset the broken bone as well as we could and bound new splints on it. As before, he made no sound. When the work was done he calmly asked for another smoke. And then, with the cigaret glowing, he told how he had come there.

HE HAD been a soldier of your United States in the great war in Europe. When the war ended and he returned to his own country, he said, he made the same mistake that many other released soldiers made—he lingered in the vast city of Nova York, quickly spent all his money, and then found himself unable to get work. So, when a chance to make money came unexpectedly to him, he grasped it eagerly.

While he was sitting with other penniless soldiers in a place called Union Square, a tall bony man with strange eyes passed by several times, looking sharply at him and his mates. Then this man asked him and four others to come with him. Being curious, they did so. He led them to a big hotel some distance away, took them to his room, and there made them an odd offer.

He wanted trusty and fearless men to go with him into South America and help him seek something of which he would tell them later on. They would be handsomely paid, and if he found what he sought they would all be made quite rich. There might be danger, he said, but they would be well armed, and the reward would be worth any risk. He had already obtained the promises of other war veterans to go, and he intended to get more. All they had to do was to come along, obey orders, ask no questions, and take their chances of success.

With nothing to lose except their lives, all five of them accepted. Soon afterward they sailed southward with more than a dozen other soldiers whom the bony man had got in the same way. They came up the Amazon and turned into a smaller river, where Indian paddlers in long canoes carried them southward for many days. And in all this time their queer leader never told them where they went or why.

He had been acting oddly for some time, and naturally the men had been talking much among themselves. Now at last they demanded the reason for this long journey into dismal and flooded jungle. Still they got no satisfaction. They were told that they would soon know, but the time had not yet come. Quarreling followed.

The men said they would go no farther. Finding them determined, the bony man suddenly began to rave and shriek. He screamed that he was somebody named Midas, and that he could turn all things to gold by touching them. Then he jerked out a revolver and began shooting at the men.

His bullets killed two soldiers before they downed him. Somebody fired back, and he toppled overboard and never came up again.

After that the men disputed among themselves over what they should do now. None of them had a clear idea as to where they were. Some were for going back as they had come, while others believed that by keeping on they would soon reach the Andes and could then cross the mountains and so reach the western ocean. Before they could settle the question their paddlers brought them to a small Indian settlement where the people gave them welcome. And since all were tired of so much boat travel, they agreed to stay at that place for a few days while they rested and determined what should be done next.

Two days of this were enough for Horner. In spite of much argument, his mates could not yet agree, and he grew too restless to stay idle any longer. So, quietly taking a small canoe, a tent, a little food, his guns and his bugle, he slipped away by himself on an exploring trip to the eastward.

He did not intend to desert his comrades, but only to see what he might see and then return. But he found it so pleasant to be alone that he traveled onward for five days before he tired of it and decided to turn back. Then he became confused among some winding waterways, and before he could find the right one again he met more misfortune. He lost his canoe and broke a leg.

The boat drifted away in the night. While seeking it, he tripped among some vines and snapped his leg over a projecting tree-root. Then he could do nothing but crawl back to his tent, lie there, and blow his bugle in the hope that some of his comrades might seek him.

He knew well that his chance of rescue was slight, for he had left the settlement without telling any one where or why he was going, and the other men probably would think he had gone along the river. And yesterday, he said, his courage had almost failed.

"IT'S the loneliness that gets you," he added. "Being hungry and busted up is no joke, but knowing that you've got less than one chance in a million of coming through is a lot worse. I've lain out in No Man's Land for two nights and a day, with five shrapnel-holes in me and all —— rip-roaring around, and I thought I was out of luck. But I'd rather be there than here any time. A fellow has lots of company out there. Last night I got so down in the mouth I blew taps over myself."

Seeing that we did not quite understand, he lifted the trumpet which we had laid beside him and blew the sad, sweet song we had heard at sunset.

"That's Taps," he explained. "They blow it over dead soldiers. I didn't know but I might go west before morning, so I did the honors beforehand."

"But how could you go west without a canoe, *senhor?*" I asked. He laughed, and explained that by "going west" he meant dying. So then I told him he was going west indeed, but not as he had thought.

Whether we should be able to find the Indian town over to the west we did not know; but if we did not find it, I told him, we would carry him with us all the way northwestward to our own country, where our old *coronel* would do everything possible for him. And since it was best for all of us that we lose no time, we would get under way at once.

Carrying him and his hammock together to the canoe, we left him there while we took down his tent. On our return we folded the canvas to make a bed in the bottom of the boat, stowed our supplies differently, and helped him in. When he was comfortable he gave a long yawn.

"Guess I'll rip off a few yards of sleep," he said. "I'm about all in. Haven't had a real solid snooze since I cracked my shin." His eyes closed.

After we had paddled a while Pedro said:

"He spoke truth when he said he would rip off his sleep. Hear him snore!"

I grinned, for the blond trumpeter certainly was a noisy sleeper. But as I thought of the long black nights of pain and hunger and hopelessness that lay behind him his snorts and gurgles did not seem funny at all. Indeed, I marveled that he had not gone mad or ended his torment with one of his bullets.

All the rest of the day he slept while we paddled on. Near night, as we were seeking a sleeping-place, he opened his eyes and blinked at us, the canoe, and the trees.

"Aw shucks!" he grunted. "I'm back here again!"

"Where have you been, Senhor Trumpeter?" laughed Pedro.

"I was back home, playing ball and cussing the umpire because he called me out when I never even offered to swing. Home was never like this. I'll say not! Say, when do we eat?"

"As soon as we land," I told him. "Are you ready to eat more of our sawdust?"

"I'll eat anything, buddy. If you don't get ashore pretty quick I'll start chewing your leg."

Then, lifting his bugle, he blew a loud, lively air, much different from anything we had heard before.

"That's reveille," he said. "It means 'wake up—snap into it.' Put a hop on your stroke and land me before I get violent."

"Calm yourself and spare my leg a while longer, and we all shall eat," I promised. "But I would not blow that trumpet again, *senhor*, until we reach some place where we know we are more safe. We are few, and it would not be well to let any savage Indians know we are here. Did you blow a bugle in the war?"

"Nope. Not so anybody could hear it. I knew all those army calls before any war came along. Then I wanted to fight, and the only way you can be sure of fighting these days is to make the personnel sharks think you don't know anything."

"How is that?" I wondered.

"If you can do anything they try to make you do it in the army. If you're a mechanic they keep you tinkering on bum motors. If you're a newspaper man they make you a censor. If you know a shirt from a sock they shove you into quartermaster work. If you're a cop they make you an M. P.—and then you're popular, I guess not!

"It's the same way all along the line. So when my turn came I didn't know a thing. If they'd learned I could blow a horn they might have made me a bandmaster or something. But seeing I was dead from the neck up, they gave me a gun and let me in on the big show."

This seemed very queer to us, for we had always thought that in an army everybody was expected to fight. He grinned as he talked, and it may be that he did not mean just what he said. But we spoke no more of the matter, for then we spied a good camping-spot and went ashore. And after eating and smoking, we all slept soundly.

THE next day Horner found himself. Without realizing it, we strayed off the *furo* into another channel, along which we paddled for some distance before the slant of the sun-thrown shadows warned us that we were off our course. Then, as we slowed and told each other we must go back, the Trumpeter spied an oddly bent tree leaning out over the water ahead.

"Say, this is the way I came!" he told us. "I know that tree. There was a big snake on it. I shot him off, and he kicked up such a riot he nearly upset me. Gee, he was a regular whale! Keep on going, and you'll hit the burg where the rest of my gang hangs out."

So we kept on, and as we went he recognized other things along the way.

Two days later we came out into a rather large river flowing northeastward. And there our passenger blew again that dancing reveille tune.

"Home again!" he laughed, when the last note had pealed away through the jungle. "Injun Town is only about half a mile upstream, and the rough old tough old bunch is waiting for us up there. Snap into it, buddies!"

We snapped into it. We knew how eager he was to meet his comrades again, and it had been some time since we ourselves had talked with white men. So we went upstream fast.

The Trumpeter was much stronger now after the long sleeps and hearty meals of the past few days, and as we surged on up the river he sat leaning forward, grinning and waiting for a sight of his mates. But as we swung around a bend his smile faded and his jaw dropped.

A little way ahead, under tall trees where little bush grew, a number of Indians were standing at the water's edge. Several small canoes also were there. But we saw no large boat nor any white men.

"——'s bells!" groaned Horner. "The gang's gone!"

It was so. Only the Indians waited for us there. They held weapons, and at first they seemed unfriendly. But when we came near and they saw Horner clearly they grinned at him, and as Pedro and I stepped out on shore they greeted us cordially.

A tall, grave man who seemed to be chief spoke in a Tupi tongue, saying they were glad to see again the blower of the horn, and that they had thought him gone forever. I explained why he had left them and why we now came with him, and asked where the other white men were. He said they had gone two days after Horner disappeared; that they believed he had gone up the river, and so they had decided to go that way also. He added that he was sorry to know the blower of the horn had hurt himself, but that a broken bone would soon mend, and all of us were welcome to his village.

"When you guys get through making a noise with your mouths maybe you'll give me the low-down," said the Trumpeter. "It don't make sense to me."

So I said it all over to him, and asked how he and his fellow soldiers had been able to talk with these people if they knew no Tupi. He said the talking had been done through one of their canoemen. The thought came to me that if he could not speak their tongue he might find it hard to get along with them after we left, and that we had best take him on with us. But I said nothing of this just then. We helped him out and followed the Indians.

They led us only a short distance back from the water, and then we found ourselves in a small town of little low houses. The chief took us to one of these, ordered a man and woman living in it to go elsewhere, and told us it was ours. Then he went away, and his men with him. But before he left us he looked shrewdly at our guns and asked whether we could make them speak many times.

Of course we told him yes, we could make them spit death at a whole tribe. This was not true, for we had used up many of our cartridges in a fight with some beastly *barbaros* back on the Jurua, and now we had not a great number left. But it is not wise to let Indians think you to be weak, even though they are friendly; so we were prompt in our answer. He said it was well.

After we put up our hammocks I told the Trumpeter he had better come on to the Javary with us. Before this he had been one of a score of fighting men, I pointed out, but after we went he would be alone among these Indians, and perhaps he would not be so well-treated as before. So, though the journey to the Javary might be hard, he might come out better in the end than by staying here. But he only laughed.

"Oh, they're good skates," he said. "They wouldn't pull anything raw. You don't know 'em as well as I do."

"Perhaps not," Pedro answered him. "But we have ranged the bush far more than you, *senhor*, and my comrade here speaks sense. It takes more than a few days to know Indians well; and the ways of Indians toward twenty strong white men and toward one broken white man may not be the same. And these people came to meet us with weapons and their leader just asked us how strong our guns are. True, they seem peaceable, but—you had best go on with us."

"But I tell you they're all right," he insisted. "They're only a bunch of hicks, and they don't want trouble with anybody. They raise crops and kids and take it easy, and they're regular fellows. Walk around and look 'em over. Me, I like 'em fine."

STILL rather doubtful, we did walk around and look over the place and the people. And we found that it was as he said: the Indians here seemed to be quiet and honest, happy in the peace of their town and content to toil on the plantations beyond it, where the trees had been thinned to let the crops grow. Still, we noticed that here and there were men with weapons, watching the women work and occasionally scanning the thick bush beyond.

Stopping beside one of these armed men, we talked for a time about hunting and such things, and then asked why he and his mates stood guard in this way. In a quiet, respectful manner he replied that they watched lest the place be attacked. And when we asked further about this, he said they had heard that a band of fierce savages was somewhere in the region round about.

Who the bad men were he did not know, nor whether they would come this way. This flood season was not the time for such attacks, he said, for usually those roving bands of warriors were not boatmen and so were more likely to come at the time of low water; but of course one could never know when creatures of that sort would take it into their heads to run wild and kill. He spoke of them as if they were jaguars or other beasts—dangerous animals against which his people must guard themselves but which they considered unworthy of any respect.

Thinking this over, I saw why the chief had asked about the strength of our guns. I thought, too, that this might be one reason why we were so welcome here—three men with rifles would be a great help to him if an attack should come, even though one of us was crippled. I wondered, too, why he had not planned to keep the other Americans here until he knew whether the *barbaros* were coming this way. So I asked the guard whether they had warned the white men about these savages before they left.

He said no. They themselves had not heard of the wild men until yesterday, he said, and the white men then had been gone for days. He added that he hoped the whites would meet the marauders somewhere up the river, because then there would be a fight, and of course the men with guns would kill all those brutes.

I had some doubt about this, for I thought the soldiers would find fighting in thick jungle to be far different from what they had been accustomed to in Europe. But I told him the white men would surely kill every one of the savages if they met them. Then we went back to Horner, much better satisfied with these people than we had been at first.

"Sure, I knew you'd like these brown boys after you got their range," said the Trumpeter, when we told him we had changed our ideas. "When you thought they were sneaks you were overshooting. I'm satisfied to stay here until I'm ready to go down-river. So you guys needn't worry about me, and if you want to move on don't let me block you."

We urged him again to come with us, but he flatly refused. Then we went to the chief and asked him whether he had any real reason to expect an attack. He seemed a little surprized that we had learned of this; but he said there was nothing to show that their enemies were coming here, and his men were watching only because they always did so when they heard that bad men were near. So, since the blond American would not go with us, and since we could not dally here long, we decided to continue our homeward journey the next day.

* * *

BUT the next day brought squalls. Soon after our morning meal, while we were talking with Horner and the chief and preparing to go, the sunlight was blotted out. Thunder crashed and sheets of lightning dazzled us. A flood of rain fell, driven slantwise by a fierce wind. And when the storm had passed, the chief advised us to stay over for another day.

He said such sudden storms were not uncommon here at this time of year, and that a squall so early in the day would be followed by others. If we went on now we should meet worse weather before long, he told us, and if we were not swamped by some sudden blast of wind we should at least sleep wet and uncomfortable that night. He added that the rains today would make the waters rise, so that we should gain rather than lose by waiting. So why not remain here and be comfortable and visit his people, whom we might never see again?

This sounded sensible, and we were pleased by his honest way of speaking. So we decided to stay until the next morning, and then start early. And we were glad we tarried.

For one thing, we found that he knew the weather. More squalls did come, and they were heavy. Besides this, the people were agreeable companions, and they brought us fresh food, which was a welcome change from the rations we had recently been eating. So, between watching the lightning, eating huge meals, listening to the Trumpeter's bugle, and talking with the chief and others, we spent the day very pleasantly.

While we talked we cleaned our rifles, which had grown rusty. The chief was much interested in these weapons, partly because he knew little about them and partly because Pedro's gun and mine were different from that of Horner. Ours were the American repeating rifles generally used in our region, with the lever behind the trigger and a bore of .44 caliber. The Trumpeter's gun also would repeat, but it looked much different and its action was not the same. The wood under the barrel ran almost to the muzzle, and it was cocked not by a lever but by a sort of handle on the bolt. The bore was much smaller than ours, but Horner insisted that the power of his gun was far greater than that of our big-bulleted weapons. We did not believe him until he told us his was an army rifle. Then we knew it must be high-powered.

The bony man who led him and his comrades here, he said, had managed to get enough of these rifles to arm every man in the party, as well as the flat pistols to which they were accustomed. He added that besides these guns he had something more deadly than any bullet. Then, twitching from his belt a long knife which we had taken for a sort of machete, he snapped it on to the gun under the muzzle.

"That's the real killer," he said. "A guy can get all shot up and still live, but when you slide this little old toothpick into a man he's through. Hot lead is all right, but the cold steel is the stuff that mops'em up."

Dropping the blade into a line with my stomach, he made a playful jab upward. I fell over my own feet and knocked Pedro down in dodging away from it. Then Horner chuckled, the chief grinned, and I laughed rather foolishly.

"Don't feel very good to see that thing start for your lunch-basket, does it, even though I'm only a one-legged crip sitting down?" asked the blond man. "Then figure out how Fritz felt when he saw hundreds of 'em coming over. He sure made himself A W O L, and then some."

After he explained what A W O L meant, I said I did not blame Fritz for going somewhere else without orders. I added that in this thick jungle of ours such a weapon was likely to be more useful in a fight than a far-shooting gun. His answer disturbed me a little.

"Yep, and if I hook up with any tough nuts before I hit the Amazon I may have to use it. The gang carried off all the ammunition with them, and all I've got left is two clips for the rifle and one for the pistol. But when I get my legs under me again I can show anybody that wants a row some wicked bayonet stuff."

Pedro and I glanced at each other, but said nothing. Our cartridges would not fit his gun, so that even if we could have spared any they would have been useless to him. We could do nothing to help him—or so we thought. Yet before we were many hours older we were to help him much.

With one final ripping squall the day ended. Before the rain stopped the light had gone. A moonless night followed. As we intended to start early the next day, we soon got into our hammocks. Before we slept the Trumpeter blew again, loud and clear, that song of Taps.

"Why do you do that, *senhor?*" asked Pedro. "There are no dead soldiers here."

"Right. But Taps isn't just a dead man's tune. It means 'good night—sleep tight—all's well.' I'm just saying good night to that bunch of gorillas that beat it up-stream while I was away. They can't hear it, but they're getting ready to snooze now somewhere up there, and maybe they're thinking about me."

Though he spoke lightly, we could see that his heart was lonely for the companionship of those "gorillas." We said no more. Soon we slept.

Before daybreak Pedro and I awoke and arose. Around us it was very dark, but not silent. Horner was trumpeting through his nose, and from other little huts near by the snores of sleeping Indians came back like echoes. Outside we could see nothing but the vague loom of the jungle against the star-spattered sky. So, since it was too dark to take down our hammocks, we sat down in them again and smoked, waiting for the shadows to lift.

Soon a wan light dawned on the clearing. The trees became trees instead of a black blot. The sun was not up, and a thin mist blurred the air, but day had come. We snapped our cigaret-butts through the doorway, and stood up.

THEN came war.

A long harsh trumpet-blast tore across the gurgling chorus of snores. A roar of yelling voices followed. Out from the edge of the jungle sprang naked warriors. Through the mist they came bounding toward the huts, howling and brandishing spears and clubs and bows. Other cries answered them: shouts of men springing awake, screams of women terrified by that awful trumpeting—the deadly blare of the *turê*, war-horn of brutal murderers.

We swooped up our guns, sprang outside, opened fire. The leaping brutes nearest us swerved and fell. Others screeched sharply in shocked surprize and stopped. They had not expected to find men with guns here. For an instant they wavered. While they hesitated we dropped several more of them. Then our hammers snapped down on empty chambers. But as we turned toward our door, the *barbaros* also turned and ran.

It was only those fronting us, though, who fled. The rest, though they slowed and looked toward the roar of our rifles, came on. But now they ran into a rain of arrows shot by the Indians who had sprung from their houses, and more of them fell. We saw nothing further just then, for we dashed into our hut to get more cartridges.

The American was sitting up, and he asked no questions—he was a soldier. As we swiftly reloaded and shoved our remaining cartridges into our pockets he said with a tight-faced grin:

"Go to it, buddies! Blow 'em wide open! Get around behind the house! I'll handle anything in front."

He was sitting on the edge of his hammock, with his crippled leg resting in it and the other foot on the ground to steady him. On his lap he held his rifle, pointing toward the door, and the long hungry-looking knife gleamed at its muzzle. We saw this in a flash, and then we were outside again.

Even as I left the door I met a big savage running toward it. He hurled a short spear, but I ducked and shot him in the stomach. Pedro's rifle cracked twice, but I did not look around, for I knew he had killed his men. The American's order to get behind the house was a good one, and I followed it. At a rear corner I halted and looked about.

The *barbaros* had swept in from all sides at once, and fierce close fighting was going on everywhere. A few arrows darted out from the houses, but the combat was mostly hand-to-hand. Stabbing, clubbing, choking and clawing and breaking bones, small knots of men struggled desperately for mastery. Caught by surprize and perhaps outnumbered as well, the townsmen seemed to be getting the worst of it; but they fought furiously to protect their women and children, who kept screaming as if they were already being murdered.

Picking my men, I fired again and again into the battling *barbaros.* Behind me, on the other side of the hut, sounded Pedro's gun. Then from the house itself came a shot—a sharp crack not like the blunt bark of our own weapons. Twice more that army gun cracked, and then it was still.

When my gun was empty again I shouted to Horner, asking if all was well. In answer his bugle rang out. Above the screams, the fighting yells, and the hoarse bellowing of the savage *turê* it sounded—quick, sharp blasts on the same note, lifting suddenly to two higher ones, dropping back then to the same tone as before. And it did not stop. Over and over it blared defiantly, hammering away at our ears until the men defending their homes seemed to gain fresh strength from it.

Whether the urge of that trumpet really did give them new power, or whether it and our bullets together brought fear into the minds of the wild men, I do not know. But I do know that soon the fighting died. While I was emptying my gun once more I saw that the attackers were giving way toward the bush and our friends were battling harder than ever. Before I had filled my magazine again the savages on my side of the town were gone.

Running around to the front, I found that there too the space was clear except for the townsmen and a few men grappling on the ground. The battered defenders pounced on these small groups, and when they turned away the *barbaros* who had been fighting there were dead.

The war-horn had stopped blowing. The cries of the children too had ended, and the yelling men were still. Only the bugle sang on in the same quick tune. Then, with one long flare, it became silent.

"Pretty slow stuff!" grumbled the Trumpeter as we stepped into the hut. "If that's the best your South American bad-men can do I don't think much of them. All I had to do was to pot two or three out front here and then toot my horn to pass away the time."

"You did not see much of the fight, *senhor*," Pedro reminded him. "You are inside, and the walls shut out most of it. Yet it was not such close work as some I have seen—at least not for us three. Our friends had their hands full beating them off."

"Slow stuff," Horner repeated, yawning. "Did the chief come through all right? If so, tell him I'm hungry."

WE LAUGHED, went out, and looked about for the chief. But we did not see him anywhere. Some of the Indians were picking up their dead and wounded, while others stood watching the jungle where their enemies had disappeared. We passed along among these, glancing at the bodies and noticing that there were more dead townsmen than savages. The wounded, of course, were defenders, for the injured attackers all had gotten away into the bush or been killed when their mates retreated. Without trying to count the dead, we could see that without our bullets to aid them our friends would have been quickly overwhelmed and butchered.

We could not find the chief among either the living or the dead there in the clearing, so we asked men what had become of him. They told us he was hurt and now was in his own house. They said also that, armed only with a club, he had killed three of the *barbaros;* and they showed us the bodies, each with its head crushed.

When we entered the chief's hut we found that he had not fared any too well. His left shoulder was badly torn by a spear-thrust, and a long arrow stuck out from one leg. A little old man whom we had not seen before was working to pull out the shaft, but its head was buried so deeply in the muscles that he was only hurting the chief, who sat silent but with lips drawn tight.

Looking up and seeing us, the chief motioned for me to draw that arrow out. I did so, but I had to pull hard, with one foot against the leg to brace it. When it came away the chief rocked in his hammock with pain, though he still gave no whimper. A look at the arrow-head showed me why it had stuck so stubbornly. It had double barbs, pointing both forward and back, which tore the flesh when they went in and when they came out, and which would prevent the shaft from being removed by pushing it on through the wound instead of drawing it out backward.

It was one of the most cruel weapons we had ever seen, and the sight of it angered us. Until now we had not felt any great hatred for those wild men; we had fought only because we were attacked, and so must kill or be killed. But those barbs, deliberately placed so that they would torture a man wounded but not killed, made us hot.

"If the brute who made this is still alive I hope he has one of my bullets in his bowels," I growled.

"And I wish I could shoot a few more of them," said Pedro.

We talked in our own language, but the chief was watching us while the little old medicine man worked on his wounds, and perhaps he understood. He spoke, telling us to keep our guns ready for quick use when the time should come. The *barbaros,* he said, probably would attack again.

Somewhat surprized, I said we thought the fighting had ended. He shook his head, saying that it was not the way of those fierce men to quit while many of them were left alive. They had expected to overpower him and his people by attacking while the town still slept, but our prompt and deadly fire had surprized and confused them so that they could be fought off. But now they were preparing for another assault, and when they were ready they would come in spite of our guns, and the next fight would be to the death.

He added that unless we and our guns were strong the wild men would win. Many of his best men were dead or hurt, and he himself could not fight so well as before. He spoke very calmly, as if only saying that it might rain before night; but his eyes went to his two small children, who stood close by and watched the medicine man. We too looked at them—chubby little fellows with round faces and wide eyes—and shut our teeth. And though we knew our cartridges now were far too few, we told him our guns were strong enough to wipe out those beasts of the bush if his people would fight as bravely as before. He answered simply that they would fight until they died.

Soberly we went back to the Trumpeter, taking with us the bloody double-barbed arrow. We told him all there was to tell, and gave the arrow to him. As he studied it his face hardened.

"Dirty mutts!" he said. "If they'd shoot a thing like that into a man what would they do to the women and kids? Blast 'em, I hope they do come back—I want another crack at them! And say, if they come don't stick around this shack. Pick a couple of places where you can get a cross-fire and make your bullets count. I'll take care of my end of the riot."

Then he grinned.

"Gee, but wouldn't the gang be hopping mad if they knew they'd missed a regular row! By this time they must be half-way to Borneo, or Bolivia, or whatever you call that spiggoty country down south, and wishing something would happen. And here squats little old Jack Horner, the poor crip, with a real rough-house coming off and not another Yank to see it. If I ever meet up with that bunch of gorillas again won't I rub it into 'em! Say, when do we eat?"

We did not eat at once, but after a time food came to us. Armed men watched ceaselessly, and nobody went close to the bush, but otherwise life went on much as usual in and around the houses. We breakfasted heartily, talked more with Horner, and tried to pick places for that cross-fire he wanted. But this we could not do with any certainty because we could not guess how the next attack would be made.

All around the clearing rose the jungle, and the *barbaros* might burst out from any part of it. They might come as they had come before, from all points at once, or they might divide into parties and charge from several different quarters. If we fixed any particular spots for our firing we might find ourselves in the wrong places when we were needed. So, after some argument, we decided simply to take things as they came and do our best to meet whatever plan our foes had.

"One thing is pretty sure," said Horner, "and that is that they won't come just the way they did the first time. They attack by trumpet-signal, and that shows they've got some idea of teamwork. Fighting men with any brains don't pull the same stuff twice running, and you've got to watch out for a trick this time. Tell the chief not to let all his men go piling into the first bunch that shows up, but to hold some in reserve until he sees where he can use them best."

That was sense, and I took the message to the chief while Pedro stayed and watched. I found the tribal ruler now sitting quietly with his leg and shoulder bandaged with pads of bark-cloth, and talking with several of the older men. He agreed that the advice of the white soldier was good, and gave orders to those with him that certain men should be held back for a time. He asked me also whether I would direct the fighting of those men. But I refused, for I wanted nothing to think of but my own work, and I knew his men would understand their own leaders better than me. Then I returned to our hut.

A LONG time dragged past. The sun rolled high and hot in an unclouded sky. We talked little and smoked much—I do not believe I had ever smoked so many cigarets in one morning. Around the other huts hung the strained silence of tense waiting. At the edge of the jungle no life showed, and from it came no sound. Between houses and bush the only living things were the vultures that had swooped down and were stripping the bones of the dead wild men.

"Ho-hum!" yawned the Trumpeter. "This is the hardest part of war—waiting for the other guy to start something. I'm getting sleepy. Might as well have a little music. Guess I'll give those roughnecks out yonder the reveille and wake 'em up."

As his rollicking tune ended Pedro leaned forward, listening. A confused noise, muffled by the bush, sounded and died.

"The *barbaros!*" I said.

"Perhaps so," he replied doubtfully. "It seemed like the voices of men shouting together, but I did not think our enemies were so far away."

Again we listened, but no further sound came. We settled back into waiting.

"Lourenço," my partner said softly after a time, "do you see something climbing in that tall slim tree over yonder?"

Following the line of his pointing finger, I glimpsed a dark body moving upward at the edge of the bush. The leaves between it and us were so thick that I could not see it clearly, and soon I lost it altogether.

"Yes. I saw it. But I can not see it now."

"I can. It has stopped and is resting on a limb. Perhaps, Senhor Trumpeter, your music has made the blower of the *turé* jealous. If that is he, I will play him a tune on this little steel pipe."

Lifting his rifle, he rested it against the side of the doorway and stood aiming steadily at the thing in the tree. And soon his joking remark proved truth.

Out from that tree broke the bellow of the war-horn. Pedro's rifle spat. The blare of the *turé* ended abruptly. The dark form fell crashing down through the branches.

Yells sounded behind our hut. Pedro and I jumped around the corners. A mass of savages was charging straight at us.

As we threw up our guns the mass split into three bodies. One swerved to the right, one to the left, and the third came on. At the head of this middle force ran a huge brute smeared with red paint, wearing a belt of human hair and a necklace of human teeth, howling like a madman and carrying a tremendous club.

We both shot him at the same instant. He pitched on his face and lay quiet. Over his body the others jumped, and we fired so fast that we killed some while they were still in the air. A small heap of corpses grew between us and the dead leader. Other warriors stumbled over these bodies, falling themselves and tripping more men behind them. By the time our guns were empty the force of the rush was broken.

But we got little time to reload. I managed to get two more cartridges into the magazine before the first *barbaros* reached me, and I fired these straight into their faces. Then I swung my gun, braining one man with the barrel, and dropped the empty weapon. Seizing the warrior I had just killed and holding him up before me as a shield, I pulled my machete and set my back to the wall.

JUST what happened after that I can not tell you. It was stab—slash—dodge aside—stab and slash again, always holding that dead man in front and keeping the wall behind. All I can remember is snarling faces, stinking breath, grunts and groans and screeches, blood and brains and entrails. At last, gasping and dizzy with exhaustion and half-blinded with blood from a gash on my forehead, I leaned against the wall and found no man attacking me.

On the ground near me four men were heaving and wrenching, and out of the tangle a red machete rose and fell. By the time I got my wind and stood away from the wall their fight was over. Up from among the bodies rose a half-naked, red-smeared figure which reeled toward me. I lifted my machete to attack it. Then I recognized the bloody man as Pedro.

He stumbled against the wall and slouched there, sick from fatigue and blows. When he could breathe naturally again he twisted his split lips in a grin.

"Drop it!" he wheezed, looking at the dead savage still clutched in my left arm. After a glance at it I dropped it. Its head was no longer a head but a crushed pulp, battered in by club-blows aimed at me. Its trunk, too, was full of gaping wounds, and several short spears stuck out from its ribs.

We picked up our guns and reloaded. The cartridges were our last, and so few that neither of us could fill his magazine. We looked at each other and at the fighting around us. And Pedro said—

"We must keep these for our last stand."

It was so. The townsmen were being beaten down. Near us no man lived, but we knew our turn would come again all too soon, and that then our rifles and machetes would not save us long. The women and children were screaming again, and the yells of the savages spoke brutal exultation. Already some of them had stopped fighting and were butchering the wounded.

Behind us the army rifle cracked twice. Horner still lived. Dimly I remembered hearing him shoot several times while we fought. Now we ran back to the front of the hut, and there we found another fierce fight going on all along the line. The wild men had charged from the bush on this side also, and only the American's foresight in providing for reserves had prevented them from catching the chief's men from behind. These men, held back from meeting the rush at the rear, had stopped the one in front. But here too they were being killed faster than they were killing.

The end of all of us was close at hand, and we two stopped at the corners and held our fire for our last fight. But then a pair of red-streaked brutes went plunging into a hut close by, and out from that house a long scream rose high over the other cries around us—the shriek of a woman in an agony of fear. It was too much for me.

I dashed down to that place, shooting down a savage who got in my way, and attacked the murderers inside, who had seized a woman and a child. Two more of my bullets were gone when I came out; but the woman and child still lived, while their assailants did not.

As I left the doorway another wild man came bounding at me. Firing from the hip, I shot him in the body. He fell, writhed, clawed the ground, went limp and was still. The downward yank of my lever brought up only an empty shell. My last shot was gone.

A thrown spear thudded into the wall.

Several more *barbaros* were coming at me. I sprang back into the house, where, with machete drawn, I waited just inside the door. But most of those killers never reached me.

A sudden crash of gunfire ripped out. Two of the charging savages toppled sidewise. The others stopped, faced to their left, poised there staring. At the same instant the wild yelling ceased. It seemed still as the grave.

CRASH! Another volley.

One of the wild men before my door doubled in at the middle and dropped. Another fell backward, the top of his head gone. Only one was left standing. He whirled about, looked this way and that, and bolted for the shelter of the hut where I stood. As he came I saw that now his face was drawn with fear.

I stepped aside. As he plunged in at the doorway I swung my machete hard to his throat. He flopped down, his head cut almost off. The woman and child cowering behind me screamed again, but I gave no attention to them. I popped out into the open.

No more volleys came. Instead, the firing now was a steady crackle. Naked men were dropping dead. Other savages were running—some toward the bush, some toward houses, some straight at the place where the shooting sounded. That place was near the river, and there among the shadows I saw gleaming steel, spurts of flame, yellow shirts and broad hats.

The Trumpeter's "gorillas" had come back.

SHOUTING in wild joy, the desperate townsmen sprang again on their confused enemies. With spears, clubs, bare hands, they fought as if suddenly given new life. Then a whistle shrieked out—one long blast—and at once the firing ceased.

With the end of the shooting, wild men who had taken cover came running out again and rushed toward the yellow shirts. They thought—and so did I—that the bullets were used up. But the riflemen had not stopped fighting. They had only begun. With a roar they came lunging forward, the long knives on their guns flashing in the sunlight.

Then, while I stood there staring like a fool, I saw what those knives could do in the hands of men trained to their use. I had thought the bayonet must be a slow weapon, but I learned otherwise. Those grim-faced Americans seemed hardly to be really fighting, but only to be jabbing and dancing about; yet the savages swarming at them dropped, dropped, dropped, and the soldiers kept coming on.

But they came more and more slowly, and soon they were stopped. Heaving, hacking, stabbing, spearing, white and brown men were locked in a solid mass. And then, with the *barbaros* jamming together, the shooting started again.

The shots sounded dull and muffled now. Later I learned that this was because the muzzles were almost against the skins of the *barbaros*, and also that each of those bullets tore through two or three men. The firing did not last long, but it seemed to blow the wild men off their feet. So many fell dead at once that they blocked and bore down the others, and what had been a tangle of raging warriors became a heap of flesh.

Out of that pile squirmed men yelping with terror, who tried to break loose and run. And into that pile plunged the soldiers, reaching the struggling *barbaros* with tremendous long thrusts and spearing them like fish. Here and there a savage managed to pull himself out of the welter and run, but none of these ran far. The townsmen cut them off and slew them before they could reach the shelter of the jungle.

"Lourenço! To the rear!" called Pedro's voice.

I started, looked around, could not see him, and got around the hut quickly. I had forgotten all about the fighters on the other side of the houses. There too I found white men battling hard, and these had not overcome their foes. There seemed to be fewer soldiers and more savages on this side, and the two forces were not locked together but broken up into scattered groups, every white man fighting his own battle against a number of copper-skins.

Pedro, after his shout to me, had thrown himself into this fighting and was swinging his machete on wild men who were swarming on a lone soldier. As I ran I picked another group doing the same thing, and a few seconds later I was hacking at their necks. For a while I was very busy. Then I found a limping townsman helping me with a spear, and between the soldier in front and us two in the rear we cleaned up that group.

Shots cracked around us as the last wild man fell at our feet. New yells rang out.

Barbaros ran for the bush. The soldiers and village Indians from the other side of the town had swept in here to finish the battle. With their coming the wild men had bolted, and they found nothing to do but stand and shoot rapidly. When the crackle ceased no living enemy was left in sight.

* * *

"PHOOEY! 'Tis a hot day for workin'!" panted the soldier whom I had helped, mopping his broad face with a sleeve and grinning at me. "Thanks for carvin' up them guys the way ye done. I been gittin' fat, and me wind ain't what it was."

"And I thank you, *senhor*, and your comrades, for coming when you did," I said. "My last shot was gone."

"Was it so? I wouldn't think ye'd need a gun anyways, feller. Ye sure can sling a wicked knife."

Then up came another soldier—a long, lean, easy-moving, red-spattered man.

"Howdy, mistuh," he drawled, looking at me. "Have yuh seen a good-fo'-nothin' rapscallion named Hawnuh—a li'l cuss with a brass hawn an' a lot o' gall?"

"He is in that house, *senhor*," I nodded. "My partner and I found him with a broken leg and brought him back here."

The tall man lifted his brows slightly.

"Laig busted, huh? Reckon we bettuh mosey ovuh an' see how he come through this li'l pahty. Nawthin' mo' to do heah—these town boys will do the moppin' up. Come on, Mike, yuh fat Dutchman."

"Dutchman!" snorted the broad-faced man. "Ye slabsided skeleton of a down-South hookworm, if I'm a Dutchman ye're a greaser."

The lean man grinned a slow grin, but made no answer, and we moved toward the Trumpeter's hut. Other soldiers joined us on the way, looking curiously at me.

"Friend of mine," said the man Mike, noticing these looks and moving his head toward me. "Who he is I dunno, but he's there wit' the rough stuff. Anybody cashed in?"

"All present or accounted for," answered a stocky soldier with bow legs. "Tim Moran is busted up some, and so are Chicago Tony and Scotty McLeod, but nobody's gone."

"Arrugh!" grunted Mike. "Tim and Scotty need a swift kick for mixin' in at all—they're both rotten wit' fever. And that little fightin' fool of a Chicago wop— Holy Mother! Whaddye know about this!"

We had come around to the front of the house of the Trumpeter, and we stopped and stared. Its doorway was choked by a heap of dead *barbaros*.

"Hey, you Jack Horner!" some man snapped. "You all right?"

"Sure, I'm all right," came the Trumpeter's cool voice. "Kick that stuff out of the door and come on in."

We threw the dead aside and entered. Horner stood on his one good leg, with the other knee supported by the hammock. His rifle-butt rested on the ground, and the long bayonet sticking up near his shoulder was dyed red.

"Who gave you guys any license to horn in on my party?" he complained. "Here I'm getting a lot of good bayonet practise and you bust in and shoot up the whole works just when I'm going good. What you doing here, anyhow? Did the spiggoties down in Borneo give you the gate?"

"Listen at him, will ye!" rumbled Mike. "Talkin' like he was a growed-up man! And him blowin' the guts out of his tin horn a while back, tryin' to git reinforcements!"

"Not by a jugful!" Horner denied. "I blew the Charge, but I did it just to make a racket and give these boys out here a little pep. Where were you guys, anyway?"

"Up-stream a ways. We found it bum goin', so we turned around and come back. We camped above here last night, and heard ye play taps. When yer Charge come to us this mornin' we took our foot in our hand and come on. Didn't ye hear us yell when ye blew reveille?"

"I heard shouting, *senhor*," said Pedro. "But we thought it must be *barbaros*."

"'Twas a bum guess—there ain't a barber in the gang," said Mike. "But now listen here, Kid Horner. We got to slide right along down-stream before any more of the bunch kick off wit' fever. Eb Peabody, that New England feller, cashed in a couple days ago, and Tim Moran and Scotty are gittin' bad too. I hear they come ashore here wit' the rest of the gang and got mauled, and that won't do 'em no good. So we'll move as soon as we can git them lousy paddlers back—they was that scairt of the wild guys they beat it acrost the river as quick as we landed.

"I'll go git 'em now. When we're ready we'll give ye a yell. Slim, stay here and help Jack frog it down to the water. Fall in, the rest of ye."

He turned and went, followed by all except the lean man with the slow drawl, who stood calmly chewing tobacco and spitting in the eye of a dead savage who lay face upward.

"Yuh li'l hawn-toad, yuh!" said Slim. "Yuh sho' did tickle these felluhs' ribs some. Whyn't yuh jab 'em lowuh down? Yuh might of busted the steel on them rib-bones, an' then whah'd yuh been?"

"Had to take 'em any way I could get 'em, Slim," replied Horner. "They rushed the place after Pedro here left, and if I hadn't plugged a couple and sort of choked up the door with them they might have got me. Then I jabbed straight and withdrew quick. You can't do any footwork when you've got a dead leg. Ho-hum. I sort of hate to leave this town, it's so quiet and peaceful."

Slim grinned, and we laughed. After looking at the dead men a minute Pedro strode out, crossed the clearing, and disappeared into the bush. Soon he returned with a long tube.

"Perhaps you would like a remembrance of the peace and quiet of our Brazilian forests, *senhor*," he suggested. "Here is the *turê* of the *barbaros*."

"Say, that's mighty white of you!" cried the Trumpeter, reaching eagerly for it. After turning it over and examining its wooden barrel and crude mouthpiece he unfixed the bayonet from his rifle and passed the gun to Pedro.

"It's a fair swap," he said. "You guys will likely need a gun before you get home, and yours are no good with your ammunition all gone. The gang will give you plenty of shells. I won't need the gun any more."

Knowing we were indeed likely to need a gun before reaching the Javary, we took the weapon thankfully. Then came a yell from the river, and Slim came in, took Horner's arm around his shoulders, and started with him to the stream. We took down the hammocks and followed.

AT THE house of the chief we stopped to say farewell, and from him we learned that about a mile down the river we should find a channel which would take us on toward our own country. Then, with a final wave of the hand to the townsmen who had been our hosts and fighting-mates, we went on to the water.

There we found two big *ygaritês*—long canoes with arched cabins—manned by stocky *caboclos*. And there we found waiting for us another of those heavy army rifles and many of the queer bottle-necked cartridges that went with it. The gun, we learned, was that of the man Peabody who had died of fever, and we were welcome to it. After big Mike had shown us how to work the bolt action and explained what he called a "safe" and a "cut-off," we got into our own canoe and took up our paddles.

"All set, back there, Brazil?" some one called.

"All set, North America," we answered.

Our little fleet pushed off and swung away toward the far-off Amazon.

Though our canoe was lighter and faster than the big *ygaritês*, we had to stretch our muscles to keep up with them. Perhaps because of the sick men aboard, but more likely because they themselves were homeward bound, the *caboclos* heaved their craft along with swift, hard strokes. It seemed that we had gone much less than a mile when we spied at our left the channel of which the chief had told us.

"*Adeos, senhores!*" we shouted then, and swerved toward the bank. But a roar of protest followed. The big canoes stopped, and the soldiers yelled to us to come on. When we did so they told us they had thought we would camp with them a few times, and urged us to continue on with them for a day or so. But we said no, the water was ebbing and we must cut across country here.

One by one they shook our hands, slapped our shoulders, and wished us well. When the Trumpeter's turn came he said less than any of them, but there was that in his eyes and his grip that spoke louder than all the jovial voices of his mates.

"So long, buddies," he said simply. "I want to take back what I said about that sawdust grub of yours. And any guy that I ever catch knocking Brazilians is going to get one stiff clout in the jaw from little Jack Horner."

I grinned, but my thoughts were back in the jungle behind us. Somehow I seemed to see him again as on that first day—hunching himself along on hands and knee, sick and starved and broken, yet unflinching and brave clear through. And, though I too said little, when my hand left his it was numb.

With one final chorus of farewells the big boats moved away. We wriggled our fingers to bring back the blood driven out by those parting grips and paddled back to the place were the *furo* opened. And there, as we turned into the bush, we heard our last of the Trumpeter and his comrades.

Out broke the hoarse, menacing blare of the *turé*, now blown only in fun by some homeward-bound soldier. As its growl died, the clear, smooth notes of the bugle rang again in that swift "charge" which had brought the fighting men of North America that morning to pull us out of the jaws of death. Finally, when the bugle in turn was still, there came to us a roaring, rollicking song.

"HAIL! HAIL! The gang's all here!
What the —— do we care?
What the —— do we care?
HAIL! HAIL! The gang's all here!
What the —— do we care now?"

THE SCALP MARKET

by H. P.

DURING the Revolutionary War both British and American officials stimulated the practise of scalping by paying generous bounties. South Carolina paid seventy-five pounds per scalp. Hamilton at Detroit was paying a fancy price. James Mooney in his "Myths of the Cherokee" states that the United States' trouble with the Apache began when a band of Americans turned scalp-hunters, working for the governor of Sonora, and massacred a party of the Indians by treachery in 1836. The scalpers received an ounce of gold per scalp.

Colonel Chivington, after massacring a band of Cheyennes who supposed they were safe under the protection of the United States' flag, took the scalps of one hundred and seventy men, women and children to Denver and put them on exhibition in a public hall. Lieutenant Richmond is listed as killing and scalping three women and five children. American soldiers took scalps in the Modoc War of 1873.

Two hundred years before the Modoc War Captain Church was commanding the soldiers sent after King Philip. The captain says thirty shillings per head was the prevailing bounty in his day, and that King Philip's head "went at the same price." One of the "king's" hands was given to his Indian slayer, "to show to such gentlemen as would bestow gratuities upon him, and accordingly he got many a penny by it." The other hand was exhibited in Boston, the head at Plymouth, the body quartered and left hanging on four trees.

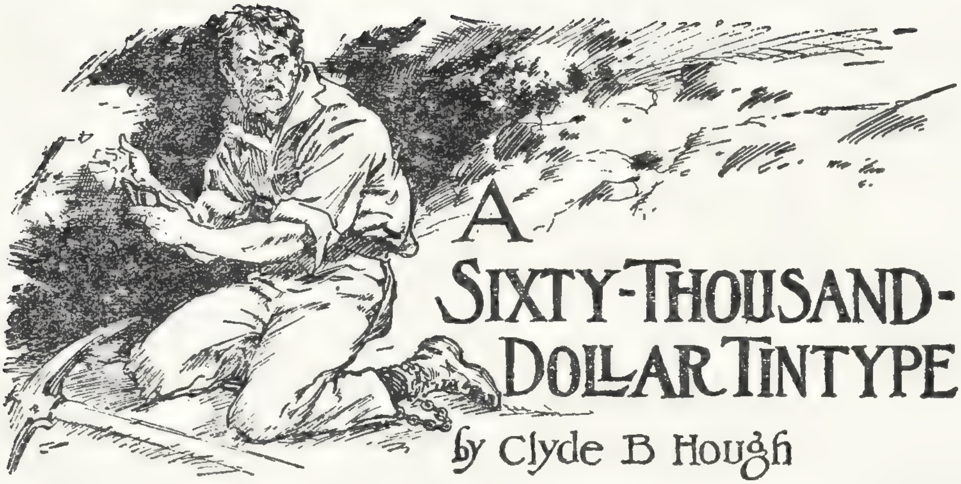
In 1723 Massachusetts greatly boomed the scalp business by offering a hundred pounds per scalp. Business at once picked up. Scalp-hunting became a pleasingly profitable industry. One, Lovewell—note Church above and now Lovewell—led forty men and caught ten Indians asleep. Their scalps were paraded in Boston and a thousand pounds collected.

Lovewell didn't quit and waste his money, but kept plugging along, satisfied with small profits until he could make another ten-strike. Then in the Spring of 1725 he struck out after the big stuff. He shot an Indian, an old man, and his chaplain rushed eagerly forward and dexterously removed the trophy.

But the pitcher goes too often to the well. Lovewell should have retired and used his gains in staking other scalping-parties without incurring risk. For the old man's friends were so unreasonable as to grow angry over the murder; and they cornered the white men, killing Lovewell and all but sixteen of his men. A popular ballad of the day may be quoted to this extent:

Our worthy Captain Lovewell among them there did die.
They killed Lieutenant Robbins and wounded good young Frye,
Who was our English chaplain; he many Indians slew,
And some of them he scalped when bullets round him flew.

From these lines it may be deduced that the good chaplain didn't overlook any bets even when assailed by the red men. While he lived he scalped, for there was always the chance he would reach Boston alive; and a hundred pounds was a hundred pounds.



A SIXTY-THOUSAND-DOLLAR TINTYPE

by Clyde B Hough

Author of "Justice," "The Weakness of Men," etc.

A LITTLE stream started high up in the Argus Mountains, trickled down Forked Gulch and finally disappeared in the yellow, thirsty sand at the eastern edge of Mohave Desert. From the bed of this shallow, tortured watercourse some one washed a few paying pans of gold-dust. The news drifted out and a crowd rushed in. Among the number was Moorey and also a fellow named Tom Bayless. Some of the men panned the stream while others tried "dry" digging in the rock-ribbed banks above. Moorey and Bayless each chose the latter method.

At the end of three weeks, a little dust from the stream-bed and a very few ounces of coarse gold from the "dry" digging was all that the new strike had produced. Men made up their packs and drifted away, singly and in groups. But Moorey did not drift. He stayed on, picking in the dry soil and hammering at the hard rocks ten hours every day. Then, upon a day, he blasted a heavy rock and uncovered a pocket that ultimately yielded thirty-four thousand dollars in coarse gold and nuggets.

"That fixes me," Moorey told Bayless after he had garnered the last ounce of gold from his strike. "Yes, sir," he concluded. "I'm goin' back to Maine now."

"When you figger on startin'?" asked Bayless.

"In two or three days. Soon as my burro's knees git a little better. He slid down a bank t'other day and skinned hisself up considerable, but I figger he'll be able to travel in a couple of days more."

Bayless was one of the few men, besides Moorey, who still remained at Forked Gulch, though, as a rule, it was not his way to stay around a dead camp and especially one where his own claim was worthless. Bayless had already taken three different fortunes out of the earth and each of them had gone on the roulette-wheel, on the faro-table and over the bar.

On the morning following their conversation, when Moorey went to "doctor" his burro's knees with some pine-tar, about the first thing he saw was Bayless packing his outfit for the trail.

"What's up?" inquired Moorey. "Hear of some new strike?"

"Nope," answered Bayless. "Just got a hunch to pull out."

"Which way you headin'?"

"North," said Bayless.

"You'll have to go to the coast," said Moorey, "in order to strike a trail north. Why don't you wait an' go with me? We could cross the Mohave together."

"Can't wait," said Bayless. "My hunch calls for a move today."

That night not more than half a dozen fires burned in the passing camp of Forked Gulch. In the light of one of these fires Moorey sat alone, wrapped in pleasant thoughts which carried him back to Maine. Presently he opened the front of his shirt and disclosed a small leather pouch that depended from a soft buckskin thong about his neck and rested on his chest. He untied the mouth of the pouch and drew out a thin case fashioned from mother of pearl. The little case was lined or padded inside with heavy red plush; and securely festooned in the plush was a small tintype—the picture of a young girl—Sadie Ames, the girl who was waiting in Maine for Moorey.

It was a pretty face indeed that gazed out from its red-plush setting. But it was not weak prettiness; rather it was strengthened by a certain firmness of features that bespoke stability.

On the underside of the lid of the little case, written in small letters, was this statement:

> I will be waiting for you.
>
> Sadie.

Sadie's face lent finality to the legend.

At length Moorey closed the case, replaced it in the pouch and rolled into his blankets for the night.

Then, on the morning of the third day, after Bayless had left Forked Gulch, Moorey packed his gold on his burro and started on the first leg of his journey back to Maine—and to Sadie Ames. He intended to cross the desert to Agua Buena, a small pueblo on the western edge of Mohave, and thence by stage to Monterey, where he would exchange his gold for bank-drafts and otherwise prepare for the trip east.

He punched his burro along the narrow trail which led down from Forked Gulch. By noon he was well out on the desert. The yellow sand smoldered and throbbed with heat and what little air stirred was like the draft from a furnace.

About one o'clock Moorey stopped in the scant shade of a cluster of giant cactus and rested till three, when he took the trail again. Hours dragged by and the sun wallowed its way down in the west. Direct heat subsided, but the air, drifting across the parched sand, was still hot on the man's face and uncomfortable to breathe.

That dim period which prevails between daylight and starlight began to settle upon the desert. But Moorey did not stop. He was making the best of these cooler hours. It was still another long day's trudge to Agua Buena, at the western edge of Mohave.

SUDDENLY in the failing light a man staggered from behind an eddied sand-dune, fell and crawled toward Moorey, calling feebly. Moorey stopped his burro, ran to the stricken man and lifted him to his feet.

"Tom Bayless, by the great Bear Seal!" gasped Moorey. "What you doin' here, Tom? What happened to you?"

"Water," pleaded Bayless hoarsely, at the same time swaying on his feet.

Moorey uncorked his canteen and held it to Bayless' mouth. After two or three long swallows he took the canteen away and hung it to his belt so that Bayless could not get at it again for a few minutes. Then he prepared camp for the night and after that, supper.

The meal was over. Bayless, somewhat revived, was now able to talk. Moorey hobbled his burro and then sat down near where Bayless lay, his head and shoulder leaning back against the packed gold.

"Now," said Moorey, "what happened to you? How is it I find you here in this wilderness of sand with no outfit, no water and a blood-stained rag wound around your head? Tell me how it all happened."

"It was this way," said Bayless. "I was punchin' my burro 'long here 'bout this same time last night. All of a sudden I saw three men on mustangs gallop out from behind that patch of giant cactus ahead yonder, an' afore I knowed what was comin' off, they swooped down on me an' one of 'em batted me side o' the head with his revolver. Next thing I knowed it was midnight an' I was lyin' on the sand alone—everything gone. All they left me was my gun—must 'ave overlooked that. Guess they thought I had gold in my pack.

"Well, I got up an' tried to make it back to Forked Gulch, but didn't git far afore everything turned black an' I went out again. Didn't come to till late this afternoon an' then I was burnin' up for water an' too weak to walk. So I crawled over there in the shade o' that sand-dune an' waited, hopin' you'd pass this way. I remembered you'd told me you'd be pullin' out in a couple o' days."

"The —— vultures," said Moorey. "It's a pity we can't run 'em down. But there's no chance—not with them mounted. Well, anyway, I got water enough to last the two of us all day tomorrow, so if you can stand the pace we'll make Agua Buena some time tomorrow night. In the mean time you better turn in and rest up. I'm goin' to keep watch so as to make sure your friends don't come back and hook on to my dust. You can relieve me toward mornin' if you feel like it."

"I'm feelin' purty good already, since I got some water an' grub in me," said Bayless, "an' I ain't a bit sleepy. Was either asleep or out o' my head, which is 'bout the same, 'most all day. What do you say to lettin' me take first watch? Then maybe I'll be able to sleep later on."

"All right," agreed Moorey. "We'll do it that way."

Hours later Moorey was aroused from sleep by a sound, a half-rustling noise that barely penetrated his consciousness. Some presence was near him. He could feel it, and even before he opened his eyes, his right hand moved swiftly toward the gun which lay in its holster beside his right hip. His eyes opened and he had one fleeting glimpse of a descending arm. There was a sudden explosion in his brain and everything ceased to be.

When Moorey next realized consciousness it was mid-forenoon. His face was broiling in the glaring sun. He lay in a welter of sweat. His hair was matted and clotted with dry blood. He got up with difficulty. His first concern was for water. This caused him to look around. He discovered that his pack, his canteens and his thirty-four thousand dollars were gone. Even his gun was gone. And Tom Bayless was nowhere in sight.

There was no wind to shift the sand and cover the tracks of the night before. Moorey circled around the jumble of imprints about the camp and finally struck an individual trail leading off to the clump of giant cactus from which Bayless said the bandits had pounced upon him. Moorey covered the distance by sheer power of will, dragging his feet through the hot, heavy sand, his head throbbing, his senses reeling.

Beyond the clump of cactus he found where a pack had been set down in the sand, and by the tracks around this place he knew that a burro had been tethered to the pack for some time. From this point there was a plain trail made by one man and two burros. The fresh trail led west—toward Agua Buena. Bandits, if there had been any, would have been mounted. They would not have been pottering around with burros. Clearly Bayless had concealed his burro and trappings here while he had gone back shamming the condition in which he had accosted Moorey.

At first Moorey's mind was staggered. He found it hard to believe the evidence that was so plain. Then he remembered how Bayless had come to him the night before with his tale of having been robbed.

"The dirty skunk," thought Moorey. "He had it all planned. I remember now that he asked me at Forked Gulch when I intended to leave there. And then his sudden decision to go ahead of me. Couldn't afford to be seen leavin' camp with me. That would 'ave made questions for him to answer in case anybody got curious about my disappearance. The crawlin' worm. Him that's made three rich strikes to my knowin' and blowed 'em in. Now he turns robber and comes here and robs me, his friend—me that's been five years makin' one pitiful little strike. And God lets a thing like that live. Well, I won't—I'll get him. That's my main business in life from now on."

It was a long day's trudge to Agua Buena and that, too, over shifting hot sand. For a wounded man without water it was scarcely less than suicide. And this fact was very well known to Moorey, but it did not hinder him. He set his face to the west and started on a trail of vengeance.

Wherever cactus or a wind-piled sand-dune offered a little shade he would stop and rest, but soon his thirst would drive him on again. Evening came and brought relief from the sun. But Moorey's thirst was excruciating. Sometimes he fell from sheer weakness and sometimes he crawled on, unable to rise. And through it all he continually renewed his vow of vengeance. With each hot breath that wheezed past his swollen, cracked tongue he was reminded of the perfidy of Bayless.

ALONG after midnight Moorey staggered into Agua Buena. Upon inquiry the next day he learned that Bayless had gone into town with two burros and a heavy pack, had disposed of the animals and, retaining the heavy pack, had taken the stage for Monterey. Moorey began to consider and to hope. Perhaps he could get to Monterey before Bayless had spent much of the stolen gold. He was flat broke. He looked up the stage-driver and fell into a bit of luck.

"Shore I'll take yer," said Bill Williams. "Didn't yer keep me when I was sick fer a month at Muddy Creek? An' didn't yer stake me when I was able to git up an' leave? Shore yer can ride from here to Monterey an' back too, if yer like. An' if yer ever mentions payin' ag'in I'll punch yer head."

Arrived at Monterey, Moorey borrowed Bill Williams' gun and began searching for Bayless. He soon learned that the robber had converted the gold into coin and bank-drafts and left town, headed up-coast. Moorey knew that Bayless was moving toward the northern camps where gambling was more riotous. This meant that the gold would go fast. Moorey could feel the hope dying in him. He went back to his friend, Bill Williams.

"It's all up, Bill," said Moorey. "He's gone and I'm flat—no money to follow him. He'll have the pile spent long before I can catch up with him."

"Yer take this an' git on his trail," said Bill, shoving a buckskin poke into Moorey's hand. "They's five hundred er so there," he continued, "though 'tain't nigh what I owes yer. But maybe it'll help yer to catch this here cayote."

The first of this money that Moorey spent was for two guns and a quantity of ammunition. Thereafter he traveled north, following the trail of Bayless, a trail that was easy to follow. It bristled with tales of all-night revels in dance-halls and sessions with high stakes at roulette and faro.

Many times Moorey arrived at places only to find that Bayless had left the day before; and more than once he had fully expected to overtake the robber at some given point, but always luck was against him. Often his information was uncertain and he would waste time on some false trail. At other times he was unable to get transportation without delay. There was no telegraph—no way of sending a message ahead faster than Moorey himself could travel. At last he reached Sacramento and learned that Bayless had gone broke there and left for the high hills of eastern Placer County, where several small strikes had recently been made.

When Moorey heard that Bayless had squandered the entire thirty-four thousand dollars, his face was awful to see. His fury was demoniac. Unconsciously he had been hoping all along to recover at least a part of his money. But that last hope was gone now. And Sadie must wait again. How long? Nothing but a desire for revenge was left him. He bought a burro and struck into the hills, bent on settling accounts with Bayless. He reasoned that Bayless, broke and unaware that he was being pursued, would remain for a while in Summit Diggin's, the camp where he was then located.

It was several days' hard climbing up to Summit Diggin's, but when Moorey was well up in the Sierras above Placerville, he followed the course of a little stream which threaded its way down the bed of a deep, narrow cañon. This made the going comparatively easy. On the second day in the cañon Moorey's attention was attracted by seams in the rock walls on either side.

These seams were chinked with dried, shriveled mud and particles of age-rotted rock. They were just so many challenges to the prospector. Even in his present mood he yielded to temptation and washed a few pans of dirt from the bed of the little stream. If there were veins of gold in the seamed banks—and they looked promising—Moorey reasoned that a little of it would have shifted down into the stream. At first the dirt he dissolved in his pan revealed nothing akin to gold. But he repeated the experiment from time to time as he worked his way up.

On the third day after he had entered the cañon, Moorey came to a place where both banks had been washed out by some ancient flood. There was a deep horseshoe on either side that, taken together, formed a perfect bowl which was halved by the stream running through its center. Just below this point Moorey washed a pan of dirt which yielded a few particles of gold. At once he began searching for the source. He found it—a thin vein of coarse gold embedded in dried mud and age-rotted rock, threading along one of the many seams which scored the eastern wall of that bowl-like washout.

Moorey's quest for vengeance faded into the background of his interest. For a time at least Tom Bayless was forgotten. Moorey set to work, prying and straining at the massive blocks of stone, between which the thin vein of gold wound its way.

After an hour of strenuous effort Moorey stopped, skimmed the sweat from his brow with a curved forefinger and sat down to consider. The farther he had gone into the rock, the richer the gold vein had grown. To work the lead, however, he needed more tools; a crowbar, a sledge-hammer and also some powder. Blasting was necessary here. By rights, he thought, he should have help—it was a two-man job.

A two-man job! There was an idea in that. Moorey studied the country around him. It was a wild, lonesome place, well-suited for the execution of the plan that was forming in his mind. He thought over the location carefully.

About fifty miles behind him to the west was Placerville. About thirty-five miles east was Summit Diggin's, where Tom Bayless was located, and thirty miles due south along the mountain-range was a small camp called Eagle Peak. Moorey knew all this because he had taken the trouble to familiarize himself with the territory before leaving Placerville in pursuit of Bayless. Consequently he knew that he was at least thirty miles from the nearest human habitation.

In a country so sparsely settled there was small chance of any one coming upon him and his new strike. This was most favorable for the purpose he had in mind. He cached his outfit there, near his strike and, leading his burro, scrambled out of the cañon and headed south toward Eagle Peak.

In the gathering dusk of a purple twilight two days later Moorey returned to the scene of his strike in the deep cañon. His burro was panting under the weight of an unusually large pack. When this pack had been carefully eased from the tired burro's back to the ground and laid open, it revealed a quantity of blasting-powder, a larger quantity of food-stuffs and the extra tools that Moorey now required. Then last, but by no means least in importance, there appeared a thirty-six-inch length of heavy chain, a ten-foot length of lighter chain and four stout padlocks. These things looked odd in the outfit of a prospector, but Moorey had a part for them in the drama he was preparing to stage.

At Eagle Peak Moorey had given it out that he was going to Summit Diggin's with the intention of staking a claim. He did that to curtain his future activities in the deep cañon.

THE following morning Moorey cached his fresh supplies along with the others and started for Summit Diggin's and a reckoning with Tom Bayless. Evening brought him to the little town of tents and cabins that stood on the very apex of the Sierras. When night had fallen and darkness blurred the shapes of all things, Moorey entered Summit Diggin's and began to scan the faces of men, himself keeping in the shadows. An hour so spent was without results.

Most of the cabin doors were open to the warm, balmy air and fragrant night odors of Summer. Moorey pulled his hat low over his eyes and went among the cabins, still keeping to the shadows, but contriving to peer in through the open doors. In this way his search was soon brought to an end. He had discovered Tom Bayless sitting alone in one cabin by a table on which a candle guttered and flared. Moorey crept up to the wall of his cabin and then along the wall to the open door.

"Hands up!" he commanded in a low, tense voice, at the same time stepping through the door with his gun trained on Bayless.

Bayless put up his hands and raised his eyes to the face of the man who had given the order.

"Well," he said evenly—Bayless was no coward—"it looks like the showdown has come."

"You keep quiet," ordered Moorey. "I don't want no company to this here party."

Moorey's tone, backed by his gun, was convincing. Bayless remained silent. Moorey stepped forward and appropriated the other man's gun.

"Got a burro?" he asked, his voice low and guarded.

"No," answered Bayless, following Moorey's example in the manner of his speaking.

"Pack," snapped Moorey, "and mind you no noise. I'm goin' to take you out of this camp alive if you'll help me. But failin' that, I'll shore leave you here dead. Mostly it depends on you."

Under the stimulus of Moorey's dominant urging and the ever threatening gun Bayless made up his outfit for back-packing. Then the two men passed silently out of Summit Diggin's and thereafter traveled west down the mountainside. This was made possible by the light of the moon which penetrated the foliage. Always

Bayless walked ahead, Moorey a step behind, his revolver held ready for instant action. The going was down-grade and they traveled fast.

The moon grew pale, the red glow of dawn spread on the eastern sky, the sun rose above the jagged peaks of the Sierras and Moorey and Bayless, toiling down the deep cañon, came to the washout where Moorey had found gold.

"Now, Bayless," said Moorey, "here's where I collect.

"I've made a strike here and it looks like a rich one, but it's hard to work—can't tell how long it'll take. But as long as it does take, you're my slave. That's the plain English of it without any fixin's. I haven't decided yet what I'll do with you when the work is done. But right now I'm aimin' to make shore that you can't get away."

Moorey brought out the thirty-six-inch length of heavy chain, looped its ends closely about Bayless' ankles and secured them with two of the four padlocks, one at each ankle.

"Now," said Moorey when the chain had been adjusted to his satisfaction, "the first thing we'll do is build two low culverts over the stream, one above this here washout and the other one below. Make 'em each about forty feet long. I'm goin' to blast the banks on each side so as to close the cañon up. Then I'll have you walled in all around. The culverts are to keep the stream from bein' dammed up. I'll go and cut the timber and roll it down to you and you can chop it up into whatever lengths you need for making the culverts. And while I'm up above don't think you can get away, because I'll be lookin' down every few minutes and I'd see you before you could get very far."

Then Moorey handed Bayless an ax, took one himself and climbed out of the cañon. The rest of the morning he spent in felling spruce-trees, trimming them and rolling them down to Bayless. By noon the two low culverts, constructed of strong logs, had been laid. Then Bayless, under Moorey's direction, made a number of cavities in the banks of the cañon in which Moorey packed charges of powder. First they blasted both banks at exactly opposite points above the gold vein. Then they repeated the action with both banks below.

"A regular pit," said Moorey, eying the steep banks, "and a deep one—I'd say about thirty feet deep. No good tryin' to climb out of here, Bayless—not with your legs chained together. And now I'll read you the rules of this here camp. First, don't ever get behind me. I'll help you carry out this one. Second, don't ever come closer to me than six feet. The penalty for breakin' either one of these rules is hot lead. If you don't believe me break one and see. Everything else we'll work out as it comes up."

By this time it was night, and the two men ate. The season was Summer, and the weather was hot. A piece of canvas spread on the ground, and on that two blankets, would be bed enough.

At last when the two men were ready to turn in Moorey made down his bed at the upper side of the washout and ordered Bayless to spread his canvas and blankets at the lower side, his head close to the trunk of a small, scrawny pine-tree. Thereafter it was to this pine-tree that Moorey chained Bayless by the neck each night. That was the purpose for which he had bought the ten feet of small chain and the other two padlocks.

Next morning Moorey set Bayless to work hammering loose and prying out rock along the seam which contained the gold vein. Meanwhile Moorey busied himself down by the little stream, setting up a cradle in which to wash out whatever gold there was in the earth and rubble that Bayless garnered from the seam. For three days the work went on smoothly and Bayless seemed resigned to his fate.

Then on the morning of the fourth day Bayless decided to make a break for liberty. He picked a place that looked fairly easy to climb, and while Moorey was busy getting breakfast—he always did the cooking—Bayless moved carefully, rattling his ankle-chain as little as possible, to the chosen spot and started to work his way up.

He had reached a point about ten feet above level ground when Moorey's revolver barked suddenly across the still morning air. Simultaneously with the report the chain jerked sharply at the climbing man's ankles. He lost his hold and slid to the ground. Then he sat down, rubbed his stinging ankles and looked at the chain. The middle link was smeared and spattered with lead where a soft bullet had flattened out against it. He raised his eyes from the lead-spattered chain in time to see Moorey reload his revolver and shove it back in the holster. Not a word was spoken by either man. Moorey went on cooking as if nothing had happened.

AFTER breakfast Bayless worked steadily and quietly for a couple of hours. But all the time he was turning over in his mind the incident of that morning. He was well pleased with the outcome of his experiment. It convinced him that Moorey was not overanxious to kill him, for the present at least. He wondered what Moorey would do if he flatly refused to work. He decided to feel his captor out. Following this idea, he leaned on his pick-handle and stood resting.

Scarcely had Bayless assumed this position when the pick-handle fell violently from under his weight, leaving a stinging twinge in his hand. He looked across the stream and saw Moorey still holding a smoking revolver. Then he looked down at the pick-handle and noted that it was barely nicked by a bullet. Bayless gathered up the pick and worked for another hour. Then he again threw the pick aside and deliberately sat down.

"I take it you're refusin' to work," said Moorey.

"You take it right," said Bayless. "I've decided I'd rather be shot than be a slave."

"I'm not hankerin' to kill you—at least not just yet," Moorey informed him. "I've got work for you to do. But if you won't work I'll have to try moral 'suasion, as my ma used to say. And speakin' of ma, now that gives me an idea. Sometimes when I was a bad little boy ma used to put me to bed and then I'd generally see things ma's way. That's what I'm goin' to do to you, Bayless; put you to bed and chain you by the neck to your hitchin'-post and keep you there till you're willin' to work.

"Make down your bed," Moorey ordered.

"I refuse to do that, too," said Bayless.

Moorey drew his revolver, walked across to Bayless and pressed the gun against the back of his neck.

"I said I was not hankerin' to kill you," Moorey explained. "I never said that I wouldn't do it. Make down your bed."

Bayless realized that there was nothing to be gained by forcing Moorey's hand and he felt sure that he had reached the deadline, for the present at least. So he went and did as ordered. When Bayless had spread his canvas and blankets near the pine-tree Moorey chained him by the neck as usual and removed the ankle-chain. Then he went back to work. The whole business looked silly and for a while Bayless thought he was going to have it real easy. He concluded he could stand that kind of thing just as long as Moorey could. But this was only the preliminary to Moorey's game. He had his trump card yet to play.

Noon came and Moorey silently and deliberately cooked and ate his dinner. But he gave Bayless nothing to eat. Night came. Moorey cooked and ate again, went down to the stream, washed his tin plate and began packing the food away for the night.

"Don't I git nothin' to eat?" asked Bayless, breaking an eight-hour silence.

"Eat when you work," said Moorey.

This put a new face on the situation. For the first time now Bayless realized that he was completely in Moorey's power. He admitted to himself that he was helpless. The only hope left him was that Moorey might grow careless later on. But now he must eat. He had had no food since early morning.

"Gimme somethin' to eat," he blurted, "an' I'll go to work in the mornin'."

"Work first and eat after," came the answer.

"But it's night now. I can't work till tomorrow mornin'."

"Then you can't eat till tomorrow at noon."

Bayless had seen enough of Moorey to know that it was useless to say more. It was a bitter dose for Bayless, a man accustomed for years to the freedom of frontier life. He pulled his blankets over him and sought surcease in slumber, but he was hungry and sleep was a long time coming.

The following morning, after Moorey had finished his breakfast, he fastened the heavy chain at Bayless' ankles and unlocked the one at his neck.

"If you want to work," said Moorey, "there's the tools over there where you left 'em."

Bayless said nothing but crossed over to the gold vein and went to work. At noon Moorey gave the other man all he wanted to eat. After that the days passed swiftly, occupied by the hardest kind of work.

The gold vein continued to yield some gold each day and this nourished the hope that the vein would eventually lead to a pocket. So the prying and sledging and blasting went on day after day and the shaft grew deeper and deeper into the mountainside. And Bayless gave up all hope of escape. Moorey did not grow careless as Bayless had hoped he would. He never deviated from his carefully planned routine; a routine that made it possible for him to enslave the other man. Each day he hobbled Bayless with the heavy chain and each night he chained him by the neck to the pine-tree like any work-beast.

Then after weeks of racking labor, upon a day when the shaft had been driven so far into the mountainside that daylight penetrated it but dimly, a large stone, dislodged at one side, revealed a shapeless, irregular pocket that was filled with nuggets and coarse grains of gold. Moorey never entered the shaft himself except to inspect it each morning while Bayless was still chained to the pine-tree. So Bayless as usual was working alone and he was miner enough to know at a glance that he had opened a rich find.

For a few moments, Bayless thrilled to the natural elation of his discovery. Then he realized that this gold would go to Moorey, the man who had made of him a slave. A bitter, cynical smile distorted his lips; he seized the large stone and jammed it back in the place from which he had dislodged it. He wedged and chinked it in securely and then covered all the marks of his work with fresh earth. After that he carefully worked past the closed pocket and continued to dig out rubble and a little gold along the original vein.

NEXT morning Moorey made his usual inspection of the shaft and of course passed within a few feet of the sealed pocket without knowing it was there. Then down within the narrow, hate-filled walls of this prison-pit there occurred a little thing, a trivial thing which, like so many other mere incidents, was destined to cause far-reaching results.

The buckskin thong about Moorey's neck—the one to which was attached the little tintype in its mother-of-pearl case—became soaked with perspiration and, being worn from long usage to a mere thread, broke. The small leather pouch, the thin case and the broken thong all fell out at the front of Moorey's open shirt and lay upon the ground, unnoticed.

A few minutes later Bayless came out of the shaft bringing his bucket of rubble. He saw the pouch lying where it had fallen. It surely did not look to be a thing of importance. Still Bayless did not know what it might contain. Here might be something that would prove of use to him—something with which he might be able to free himself. He must let no possible chance pass. Moorey's back was turned, so Bayless picked up the pouch and quickly stuffed it in his pocket.

Back in the shaft, Bayless opened the pouch and tried to examine its contents. The light was too dim. He crawled out near the shaft entrance where the light was better. Here he unfastened the little mother-of-pearl case and saw the face therein. His eyes opened wide and his under jaw sagged. He turned the little trinket in his hand, scarcely aware of his action. Then his eye fell upon the inscription on the underside of the case-lid, and he read:

> I will be waiting for you.
>
> Sadie.

Bayless closed the little case, put it in the pouch and tucked it away in his pocket. Then he crawled back to the far end of the shaft. He went slowly, thinking many thoughts. He stopped in front of the rich pocket which he had discovered and sealed up the day before. He had been determined then that Moorey should never come into possession of the gold. But that had been yesterday; today it was different. In a few short seconds the girl's face on the tintype had changed everything.

Bayless found his pick, dug away the earth and pried out the large stone with which he had effectively concealed the rich deposit. Then he filled a bucket with dirt from the pocket and carried it out.

In a few sentences he told Moorey of the pocket, though he did not mention its previous discovery, nor the finding of the tintype. Moorey seized the bucket and rushed to the stream. Here he hastily emptied the bucket into the cradle, poured in a couple of buckets of water and began sloshing it back and forth, dissolving the dirt.

Presently Moorey poured off the water, which was now thin mud, and found the bottom of his cradle covered with coarse dust, small grains and a few nuggets of gold. He tilted the cradle sidewise so that Bayless, standing on the bank, could see.

"It's the richest dirt I ever saw," said Moorey. "It shore is one whale of a strike if there's much more back there like this. How big is this here pocket, anyhow?"

"I can't tell," answered Bayless, "but from what I saw I think it's big enough to hold a real fortune."

For the remainder of that day and the next two days to come, Bayless crawled back and forth from the shaft-mouth to the pocket, from the pocket to the shaft-mouth, and each time he brought out the wooden bucket filled with rubble from the pocket.

On several occasions when Bayless came out of the shaft with his bucket of rubble, he found Moorey intently searching the ground. Manifestly he was looking for something lost. And at last he asked Bayless if he had found a small leather pouch. Bayless denied having seen it. He wanted to keep that tintype himself, and for no mean reason, either.

At last the pocket was empty. Its irregular, concave wall had been scraped and picked like the rind of a melon. The last bucketful of dirt had been washed. The cradle, after days of ceaseless swinging, stood idle, its part in the clean-up finished.

The gold—dust, nuggets and grains—lay heaped on a doubled sheet of canvas. Bayless looked at the pile from his side of the pit—Moorey never allowed him to come closer—and estimated it with an experienced eye. It contained all of sixty thousand dollars, he knew.

Moorey made up his gold in light packs with which he would be able to climb the steep banks to the outer world. Then he chained Bayless by the neck to the pine-tree—he took no chances—and began carrying up gold. His burro he had kept tied on the mountainside above, where he had fed and watered it each day. When the last pack had been carried up, Moorey turned to Bayless and said:

"There's grub in the cache where I kept the supplies. I'll take the chain off your neck now and give you a small three-edged file. I'm makin' shore you don't upset my plans again. By the time you can file the chain loose from your legs I'll be on my way to Maine."

Moorey held his gun ready, just as he had always done, and unlocked the chain that was around Bayless' neck and handed him the little file. Then he climbed the bank for the last time and, leading his burro, which staggered under the weight of gold, disappeared down the mountainside.

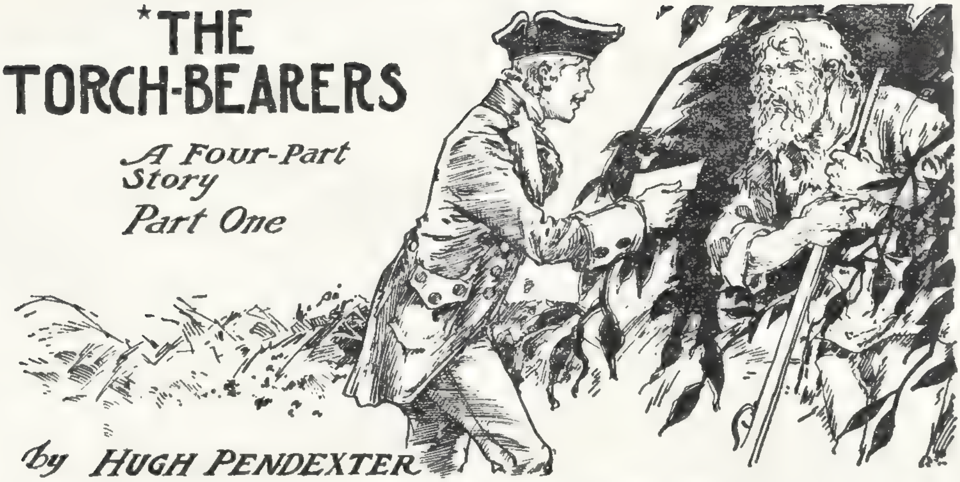
Bayless hobbled over to the supply cache and turned back the canvas. There was grub, just as Moorey had said, but there was not one little yellow fleck of gold. Bayless had not expected any. He sat down, drew out the little mother-of-pearl case, opened it and gazed thoughtfully at the face on the tintype.

"Well, little sis," he said, speaking solemnly to the picture, "I ain't much good, but I'm sendin' you a good husband today—an' a pile o' gold. But you won't ever know 'bout that. An' some Winter night when you're sittin' afore a big log fire an' yore husband tells you 'bout the bad, bad man that robbed him in the Mohave Desert, you won't ever dream that yore missin' brother was the robber. An' Moorey won't ever know that his brother-in-law packs two names, one of which is Tom Bayless."

*THE TORCH-BEARERS

A Four-Part Story

Part One



by HUGH PENDEXTER

Author of "The Road to El Dorado," "The Floating Frontier," etc.

FOREWORD

THERE was much of the time in the Fall of 1780 when the only American troops in South Carolina consisted of partisan bands. Could these be eliminated the frontier would be pushed back to North Carolina, then to Virginia, and the South would be detached and Great Britain's efforts to subdue her rebellious subjects could be confined to the North.

Georgia had been of little account in the struggle. Count d'Estaign's fiasco before Savannah left the patriots' cause in the South worse than it had been at any time since the opening of the war.

His Majesty's forces ruled South Carolina from sea to mountains, from the Savannah to the Pedee. Ever since the fall of Charleston in the Spring of the year the courage of the State had ebbed. The interior and back settlements had always looked to Charleston for precept and inspiration. With Charleston held by the enemy, the small communities were without a leader in thought.

Great hope had been kindled by the coming of Gates. But that warrior, puffed up by Saratoga, would not pause to drill his raw militia, many of whom had never seen an enemy. He made his second great mistake of belittling Cornwallis' veterans. His crushing defeat spread consternation in all directions. Many a patriot was convinced the cause was hopeless. But there remained partisan leaders who never faltered who kept the spirit of the people alive, who fed their starved minds with promises of ultimate victory.

One such was he whom Colonel Tarleton wrathfully dubbed the "Swamp Fox." Audacious yet cautious, always prepared and seldom if ever surprized, Francis Marion led his men well inside the hostile lines and snatched his toll from under the very walls of those forts he could not capture. Like a cloud of hornets his ragged followers stung and fell back, reappeared to inflict more punishment, then vanished in bog or swamp. He was here, he was there; a leader of a fantom band that swam black rivers and fell on the rear of those troops sent to capture him.

In flight he drew his pursuers into ambushes. He kept the spirit of the South alive through its darkest hours and most terrible trials. He became the symbol of inexorable will-power to be free. He carried the Torch until the Southland was ablaze with the new light. South Carolina's star was placed in the blue field by Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Davie and many others of similar devotion to the cause.

CHAPTER I

BLOOD'S THINNER THAN WATER

IF THE capture of General Lincoln's army at Charleston was not sufficient to prove to us of South Carolina that the State must guarantee its own destiny, the defeat of General Horatio Gates supplied the lacking evidence. Now that Gates' army, from which so much had been expected, was routed no more immediate aid could be looked for from the North. Already it was commonly believed in many sections of the South that the Federal Congress had surrendered all hope of ever ousting the king's troops from Georgia and South Carolina.

The resolutions adopted by Congress to nail the lie was unknown to the citizens of Charleston for months and during this period the right honorable Charles, Earl Cornwallis, lieutenant-general of his Majesty's troops, sought to compel by force the

*"The Torch-Bearers," copyright, 1921, by Hugh Pendexter.

allegiance of those citizens who had refused to become British subjects when the city fell.

Lord Cornwallis' tricks were varied. Our merchants were encouraged to buy heavy bills of goods and then commanded to sell none until they abandoned the rôle of prisoner and swore to support the Crown. Men who labored could sell their labor but could not sue and compel payment unless they be British subjects.

To discourage any attempt to sell slaves and plantations, preliminary to an escape North, another proclamation forbade any transfers of property except by those loyal to the Crown. Taken with the general belief that the United States, even if successful in the war, could not retain South Carolina, it is small wonder that the heart-sick and discouraged exchanged their status of prisoners captured with the city and gave declarations of allegiance to the British Government.

From my uncle's house in Tradd Street I had watched the fortunes of the new State rise and fall. At the beginning of the Rebellion there was much to puzzle my young mind. Influences in the North which worked bitterness of heart toward the mother-country were entirely lacking in the South, while those prejudices which the South entertained were not always shared by Massachusetts and New York. During those first years, while I was growing from fifteen years to eighteen, it all seemed to be a rare jumble, and only the old man's head traced it all out and found it simple to walk from cause to effect.

When the war came, South Carolina stood at the peak of prosperity. Our city of Charleston was one of the three leading seaports in the country, with between three and four hundred vessels coming and going each twelve months. She was the pet of the Georges, the most favored of the colonies. Ever since 1748 Parliament had allowed us a bounty of sixpence a pound on indigo and just prior to the battle of Bunker Hill we exported more than a million pounds.

There were few gentlemen in our colony who had not made the European tour. Travel between Charleston and London was constant and the six to eight weeks' voyage was the ordinary thing for the sons of gentlemen. It was natural for my uncle, David Macson, to plan for me to go to London and study law. I had accepted this prospect as the logical outcome of being David Macson's only nephew and prospective heir.

Very few were the men of means in Charleston who were not familiar with English cities. The majority of them had been educated in English and Scotch universities. When the war came there were forty-five men from South Carolina on the rolls of the London Inns of Court. The total from the Thirteen Colonies, if memory doesn't betray me, was a hundred and fourteen. Among the forty-five were three who were to sign the Declaration of Independence and all the others, with one exception, were to serve illustriously during the war in a civil or military capacity.

These young "Templars" you may be sure had listened to Pitt and Burke and the others of Whig persuasion and had accepted their championship of Americanism at face-value. When Pitt declared, "I am glad America has resisted," there were few, if any, of our young law-students who realized the orators took it for granted that any trouble ensuing would be contained inside the empire and would not lead to independence.

Naturally our young men came back from England convinced the colonies were being wronged. We were fond of English manners and customs. We believed we must import our coaches and chaises and furniture. Yes, and our horses. Another irritant was the kind of men being sent over to fill high positions in the colonies. The constant stream of our young men returning to Charleston, proud of their polish and education—as well they might be, courteous gentlemen that they were—were disgruntled and disgusted at beholding the vulgar ignorant Shinner, sent over as Chief Justice, through the influence of Lord Halifax's mistress. It was this making a political dumping-ground out of the colonies that turned some of our highest spirits against the mother-country.

Now while New England merchants read their destruction in the Navigation Laws our South Carolina merchants prospered under them. As a result much of the merchant interests in the colony was strongly opposed to separating from the mother-country. It was no hardship for us to ship only in British bottoms as we were not extensively engaged in ship-building.

In forty years, ending in 1779, we had built scarcely more than a score of square-rigged vessels. Our backwardness in this respect had continued for upward of three-score years. As for our traders they were doubling their money every four years, some in even less time. They also were against separation. It was a matter of bread and butter rather than of ideals.

WE DIFFERED from the northern colonies in another and more amazing respect. Our clergy as a whole were for the Revolution, and yet almost without exception they were born and educated in England. Only five residents of South Carolina were ordained up to 1775, and these out of a total of a hundred and thirty-five.

When the trouble came to a head only five out of twenty-three Episcopal clergymen were loyal to the mother-country. Lady Huntington sent out Rev. Dr. Percy as one of her missionaries and he promptly took up the cause of the colonies. And there was Rev. Robert Smith, in happier years to be the bishop of the State, who not only preached revolution, but found a musket and went a-warring.

So, too, were the Congregationalists or Independents or, as we younger fry called them, the "White Meetners," for the Revolution; as were the Baptists and the Presbyterians. And yet churchmen in the northern colonies, as a rule, were Tories.

I have said our mercantile interests were not damaged by England's laws. Yet these same laws bore grievously hard on our northern neighbors, whose future lay in manufacturing and the distribution of their products. Before the end of the seventeenth century they were prohibited from making woolen goods, and a few years later their ship-building activities were greatly reduced by law.

While prime furs were one of the assets of the cold north they could not be made into fur hats for export, either abroad or from colony to colony. This to give a monopoly to the hatters of England. Especially severe were the restrictions placed on New England's trade with the French West Indies in order to conserve the interests of the English sugar plantations in the English West Indies.

To hamper New England thoroughly in her manufactories and commerce England passed twenty-nine laws, so many lancets opening so many veins. Much of this was done more than a generation before our colony lost its love for the Hanoverians. And I repeat that South Carolina suffered none from these laws.

We had our generous bounties and could sell our rice not only in English but also in Mediterranean ports. We could sell to Spain and Portugal without passing through the English ports. Under the Liberty Tree at Mazyckboro', a suburb, it was often declared that the Stamp Act fired the train. I was too young to remember when the mob visited Henry Laurens' beautiful home in Ansonborough to search for the obnoxious stamped paper, but my uncle often told me about it; and I was soon to know of his fifteen months' imprisonment in the Tower in London because of his devotion to America.

More than once as a boy I have followed the path from Governor's Bridge out to Ansonborough, the most pretentious residential section, and marveled at Chief Justice Pinckney's mansion, the Laurens cottage and wonderful garden; Thomas Lynch's beautiful residence, built of black cypress grown on his Santee River plantation.

For all the fuss the Stamp Act created it was passed to raise funds to pay in part for the defense of the colonies. We were mighty glad of the British regulars when the Indians beyond the mountains took the war-path. No, no; let our children get this right. The Revolution was the natural result of law-makers stepping in between men and their bread and butter. It was the most ancient of all laws at work, the law of self-preservation. What crippled the northern colonies benefited the South; what was obnoxious to the South made but little impress on the North. But out of the mass of restrictions on growth each geographical section found cause for worry and finally, for rebellion.

THE happiest years of my early life were those preceding the war. I remember well the fine doings of society when Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts paid us a visit. He was entertained at the wonderful residence of Miles Brewton on King Street. The Brewton plate was talked about among people well used to the luxuries of life.

The house always held a fascination for

me, especially after poor Brewton became alarmed at his own activities in agitating against the mother-country and in 1776 sailed with his family and portable property for England and was never heard of again. The disappearance of the ship will always remain one of the mysteries of the sea, I suppose. But when Mr. Quincy was our guest there was no shadow on the land that my young eyes could see.

I remember walking by the building the night the St. Cecilia Society gave one of its concerts with Mr. Quincy in the audience, and of lingering to hear the wonderful music. There were nearly three hundred ladies present and my uncle had allowed me to take up a position early enough to see some of them in their finery. I readily believed they stepped out of fairyland.

And surely there were never braver gentlemen. Their elegance of dress surpassed that affected by men in other colonies and not a few of them wore swords. All this glitter and perfume added to my impatience to get on with my plans, to visit England and be refined and polished and educated. I was one of the youngsters present at the Colonial Exchange when Mr. Quincy was taken to inspect it. It had been built nearly two years at a cost of forty-two thousand pounds and the city was very proud of it. None of us could look ahead and see Colonel Isaac Hayne held a prisoner in its basement prior to his cruel death on the order of Colonel Balfour and Lord Rawdon.

Another glimpse of our distinguished guest was at the New Market Course on Charleston Neck, between the King Street road and the Cooper River, when Flimnap defeated Little David, with two thousand pounds wagered on the race. I recall the outcome of the event spoiled my day, for it seemed as if Little David must win, because my uncle's name was David.

And while the countryside might be dull enough during the malarial season Charleston was always alive and gay. Each Spring, even before the magnolias fully opened, the planters would begin to arrive to escape the sickness. Sullivan's Island, seven miles away, with its dry, parched soil but cool, pleasant breezes, was a famous resort from July till the first frost, which usually was the middle of November. Concerts and dances and general merry-making filled each day.

After the frost, with the planters back on their plantations, the country roads pulsated with life. Coaches, chaises and carriages, rolling back and forth continuously, making the city or passing from country mansion to mansion, gave a touch and color of happy living that can be duplicated nowhere without a well-to-do, scattered population.

Uncle David owned several pieces of outlying property and at one of these—the big one on the Santee—he put on all the fine airs of the country and kept his butler and coachman and patroon; the three stars in the constellation of every ambitious estate. If the white-headed butler was all supreme indoors and taught me some of the niceties of the table, in which he was a grand master, so did the coachman appeal to the outdoors boy and taught me whatever I knew about horses.

My third allegiance went to the patroon, who had charge of the cypress canoes and sloop, a most important office when one remembers the old-time preference for water-travel whenever possible. I can yet hear the mellow notes of his horn, announcing the coming of Uncle David bringing guests. In the evening I was allowed to sit on the stairs and watch the merry company dance their jigs and rigadoons, having opened the ball with the minuet.

I had nothing to wish for. Life had been ordered and fitted for me much as old Bowls took my measure and turned out my wardrobe. Then came the great trouble and my daily pilgrimages were tinged with a sense of danger. I lived intensively in the present instead of dreaming about the future. It was in the Spring of '74 that the "American Company of Comedians" ended a long season in our city, after presenting nearly sixty plays.

My uncle loved the play and I was permitted to witness many of the performances. Of Shakespeare's I saw "Romeo and Juliet," and lamented the cruel fate of the lovers. I was mystified by "Hamlet," but easily followed the story of "The Merchant of Venice." Then there was "The Mourning Bride," and "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Beggar's Opera," and "The Fair Penitent." Such nights of enchantment! The players were to return in a year, and I planned my life simply to exist until they came back.

One of the greatest sorrows brought by

the outbreak of hostilities to my young mind was engendered by the fear that this return engagement might not be kept. As my environment became more stirring, each day furnishing some climax, I matured rapidly. I was at St. Michael's Church to watch the men mount to the "pigeon holes," two hundred feet above the street. From this lofty vantage-point they searched the sea for the fleets under Sir Peter Parker and Mariot Arbuthnot, vice-admiral of the Blue. The last caught my fancy and I wished the colonists had a background of traditions which would permit them to display a similar poetical dignity in titles.

The failure of Parker and Sir Henry Clinton to take the city in '76 followed by General Provost's failure in '79 impelled the belief that the city was impregnable. It was in this year that Uncle David doubled his already respectable fortune, and it happened in this way:

The General Congress called in the emissions of May 20, 1777, and April 14, 1778, some forty million dollars in all, because of the wholesale counterfeiting of the two issues. It was several weeks after the resolutions were adopted before our State knew anything about it, and northern holders of the currency rushed large sums to Charleston to turn it into property regardless of price.

My uncle held large stocks of goods and soon sensed a mighty buying-incentive behind the movement, and increased his prices accordingly. and insisted on hard money or a ridiculously high premium. It was some eight months before the new bills were received to take the place of those called in and Uncle David had fared exceedingly well.

I have mentioned counterfeiting as the reason for retiring the two emissions, and while there is small doubt the enemy in New York were busy flooding the country with bogus paper, my uncle shrewdly insisted the real cause of the retirement was to be found in a desire to deflate the currency. But if Uncle David prospered by the business South Carolina as a whole suffered extensively.

My uncle was a trader and had a marvelous eye for gain. He was along in years and must make his nimble wits serve as his armor. His property consisted of plantations and much outlying property, and rich holdings in Charleston. It would be impossible for him to transmute it into silver and gold and sail away from the distracted country. So he fought to hold what he had and in turn presented a smiling face to Whig and Tory.

Nor is he to be too warmly condemned for this, as the war was none of his making and without his gear he would be an object of charity. Up to the surrender of the city on May 12, 1780, my uncle had often visited Alexander M'Queen, who lived a few doors away on Tradd Street. They united in a common resentment of the revenue acts of Parliament. But when the conquerors entered and burned the Liberty Tree, and Sir Henry Clinton had taken up his headquarters in the Brewton mansion, my relative changed his tone.

He became friendly with the British officers and promptly took advantage of Clinton's first proclamation offering amnesty and protection to those who declared their allegiance to the Crown. If my mind had been prejudiced against the mother-country it was now veering around to another angle of vision. I still resented my lost chances of being educated in England. Perhaps I was boy enough to repine for the comedians' failure to return to our new theater. It seemed logical when Uncle David summed up our situation by whispering—

"We must fight the devil with fire, lad." To him any adverse fortune was the evil one and I construed his warning liberally.

I became filled with unrest and disgust as the hot Summer months wore away. I perceived great faults in both Whig and Tory. Then came that memorable August day when Gates, flushed with the success of Saratoga—where Arnold and Morgan had much to do with the result, I fancy—announced he would dine in Camden on the morrow. Poor man! It was a sorry dish he ate from, with the bulk of his raw militia fleeing without firing a gun.

I'VE already indicated that David Macson was a canny man and fond of hard money. How he could be my gentle mother's brother I never had the wits to understand. Uncle David was all for the "siller"; hard as rock when it came to a bargain. Yet he was never lacking in kindness to me, nor close in money affairs. Like many another man of means he sought to carry water on both shoulders.

After Gates' defeat he became more enthusiastic for King George. Yet he was so cautious that although he huzza'd with king's officers and Tories in the Spring of '80 he also] slyly extended financial aid to the Whig prisoners in the city, thus raising up witnesses in his behalf if the miraculous happened and the Tories lost Charleston. This mode of procedure was what he meant by "fighting the devil with fire."

Before the city fell he would whisper to me:

"Old M'Queen is passing his amber-colored brandy again and Congress and Washington are going round in rare bumpers. The Whigs must have made a killing lad, and I must give a few more pounds to the cause."

But after Lord Cornwallis succeeded to the command of the city I heard less about donations to the patriots. And God knows they needed hard money when a bottle of rum cost fifty dollars in the Continental currency. The surreptitious aid to the poor Whigs in the city was kept up, however.

My impressions during the first years of the war were tinged with disappointment and influenced by my uncle's point of view. But I never believed that the Tories were outside of divine grace. It was human nature that some of the well-to-do should fear losing their property and reducing their families to poverty. Many poor men, too, were careless as to the outcome. The hinges on which the Revolution swung were "bread and butter." The movement to separate from the mother-country was something entirely new. There had always been the mother-country.

The proposed breaking away confounded many excellent women and men. It upset their ideas of stability. It was distrusted as an innovation. Nor, at the first, was there any open talk of separating; simply resentment against certain laws and a desire to end Lord North's ministry. This accomplished, many looked for a reconciliation with the king. Certainly there was no talk of national independence during the first of the war. The Whigs expressed devotion to the Crown even after taking up arms.

Wade Hampton, one of the most brilliant of the American officers, declared himself to be a loyal subject to the king as late as the Fall of 1780, and did not begin his career in the American Army until the following year.

The defense of Sullivan's Island and the decisive repulse to the fleet of nine sail, giving South Carolina a respite of three years, heartened the Whigs and did much to lower esteem for the British arms. Yet the fact remains that until war came Tory and Whig had been neighbors and good friends, with nothing to distinguish one from the other. Now the line of cleavage often divided families.

But to say at this late date that the Tory —because he was a Tory—was unspeakable, is child's talk. Each man was free to choose his allegiance, to decide whether he would remain with the order of things he always had known and prospered under, or take pot-luck with the new venturing. And there were many who were slow to come to a decision.

So it's small wonder that my cautious uncle, thinking of self, should nurse his money-bags, turn a smiling face on king's man and slyly contribute to the Whig, an old man's instinct of self-defense. That his heart was not bound up in the Crown's cause was shown by his failure to express in private any elation over the slaughter of Colonel Beaufort's four hundred Virginians near the Warsaw settlements; a defeat which left no regular force of Americans in the State.

To the contrary he appeared deeply troubled when the details of the butchery trickled into Charleston. After the evening meal, as I prepared his sangree and dusted it with nutmeg, he stared dull-eyed at the goblet for many minutes; then suddenly complained:

"——'s mercy! What are we coming to? Why do they fight when it only means a whipping? They must love life. . . . They love their women and children. They have homes . . . or they did have homes. Why do they fight about —— taxes and laws? They've beaten the laws in the North by smuggling. Why couldn't they keep on? We threw tea into the Cooper River and burned stamped paper. . . . Why not let it go at that? His Majesty is willing to let bygones be bygones. But still they fight!"

"Francis Marion used to say that if we had free education we'd have mighty few Tories, that we'd all be fighting against the king," I said.

If I neglected to give Marion his military title it was from force of habit, it being most unsafe while the right honorable Charles, Earl Cornwallis, and lieutenant-general of his Majesty's forces, ruled the city. On the other hand I could not bring myself to ape the Tories and dub him plain "Mister."

My uncle laughed in disgust, and I insisted I had heard Marion say it in M'Queen's house.

"Free education!" harshly cried my uncle. "What next? Free slaves? Imagine free slaves! Why should education be free? Who's to pay the shot? Am I to pay taxes so that some simpleton at the head of Black Creek shall be crammed full of book stuff to make a fool of him? If so, why not be taxed so that every one shall sing and dance? Am I to be taxed without having any say in the matter? Then why fight against the king because of taxes?

"Who would work if every one had free education? My blood! But it would next be education for the slaves! It's right I should have you tutored, lad, and send you to England—if not for this cursed row—to make something of a scholar out of you. But only a crazy man would hold I must pay for educating every hobbledehoy in South Carolina. But aside from that, what's the matter with our schools? Haven't we seminaries a plenty? We can't have a common-school system like they have in New England. Your outlying people must be equally scattered for that.

"Here in the low country, where we have the big plantations, it's unhealthy nearly half a year, and children are brought to Charleston and the islands and taught by private tutors, or taken to England. Up-country the Presbyterian ministers are teachers. But Marion is wrong whether we have free education, or don't have any. Our Loyalists are no fools.

"Our merchants are not dunces. They have minds of their own and they remain loyal to the Crown. Among the Whigs now butting their heads against stone walls are many, I'll vow, that can't write their names. I'll venture that could you see the Macsons on Lynch Creek you'd find 'em as wild as the varmints that live in the woods. But you and I lean toward the Crown; and your mother was a Macson and I am a Macson."

"The Lynch Creek Macsons," I murmured.

"Aye. And it's years since I've seen Angus Macson—my third cousin. But he was shaggy as a wild man then. Mayhap he can read his Bible, but his three sons and girl will be wilder than foxes. And they'll all be making fine rebels, I'm thinking."

I needed no argument to believe Marion was wrong. There were fine qualities about the man, however, that made a deep impression on me even as a boy, when I used to see him at M'Queen's, turning down his glass when M'Queen would insist on bumpers for this or that; or when I beheld him prowling about the water-front, keeping an eye on the *Tamar* and *Cherokee*, the armed British ships lying in Rebellion Roads off Sullivan's Island.

The last time I saw him was at Dorchester, twenty miles from the city and nearly at the limit of navigation on the Ashley. I was with my uncle and Marion was overseeing the removal of supplies and records from Charleston. Physically he would not catch a youngster's fancy, being below medium height and lean and dark of skin. I thought his knees and ankles were "knobby." But his nose was aquiline and his chin was thrust out like a fighter's, while his black eyes were as sharp as an Indian's. The Tories sneered at him and called him "French-phizzed" because of his Huguenot blood.

WE TWO fell silent. I was thinking of what Lord Cornwallis had just written to Lieutenant-Colonel Cruger, commandant at the garrison at Ninety-six, urging him to hang forthwith every militiaman who had served with the king and afterward taken up arms with the rebels. On first thought this might seem to be just punishment for deserters. But even with my Tory prejudices I knew it to be a harsh order, even though it did come from a nobleman, who had an archbishop for a brother. It was but a few months back that Sir Henry Clinton offered pardon to rebels and a "reinstatement in their rights," if they signed a declaration of allegiance. Believing they could remain neutral and save their property, many had signed.

But inside of twenty days there was another proclamation, directing that all signers of the first must prove their loyalty by taking the field against the rebels. Naturally this second announcement sent many high-spirited fellows into the ranks of the American Army; and it was these that Cornwallis now proposed to hang like so many felons. No; I was not so callow in mind as not to realize these unfortunates had been trapped by Clinton's two proclamations, and that their execution would be murder. I aroused my uncle from his somber reverie by remarking something to that effect.

He glanced about at the open windows in great fear and whispered:

"Hush! Hush! For ——'s sake, hush! Do you want to send us both aboard a prison-ship? Fight the devil with fire. Look out for Number One."

And he sipped his drink and returned to his gloomy meditations.

Left alone to meditate on Cornwallis' cruel policy, I initiated that process of reasoning which ultimately led me to condemn the names of Cornwallis, Lord Rawdon, Colonel Tarleton and Major Wemyss. My young mind, although plastic and eager to find good in those immediately surrounding me, could not accept any excuses for the hangings and burnings and lootings that characterized the war in South Carolina. So this night I was torn between doubts. Horror crept into my soul.

There came a rap on the side door, denoting some intimate, and while my uncle composed his morose features, I waited on the door and confronted Izard Tibbetts, in the indigo trade and an ardent loyalist.

"Welcome, Izard! Twice welcome!" cried my uncle, rising and stretching out both hands. "You'll be coming from the Santee— You'll be bringing more glorious news. Lad, another goblet. And set out the demijohn of the French brandy. We need a strong drink to wash it down with."

"No drink for me, friend David," sadly refused Tibbetts, flicking the dust from his legs with his crop.

"I'm on my way to see Wells and give him some news, but he'll needs be careful how he uses it. What do you think? That —— Marion has come out of his hole again. He's crossed the Pedee and whipped Major Gainey and a band of loyalists on Britton's Neck!"

"Life of my blood! How dare he strike against his Majesty!" gasped my uncle.

Then emphatically:

"But's it's only a flash in the pan. Deliver your budget to Wells and then return. The kite's-foot is sweet as ever."

And he pointed to a small table covered with pipes and tobacco.

"But that isn't all," angrily cried Tibbetts. "Colonel Tarleton was right in calling him a —— Swamp Fox. He won't stand up and fight, but must go nipping at one's heels. Inside of twenty-four hours after doing for Gainey he decoyed Captain Barfield from his post near the Blue Savannah, led him into an ambush, and, by gad, licked him completely."

Without pausing to hear my uncle's exclamations he turned and hurried forth to find Wells, who published the *American General Gazette* prior to the fall of the city, and who was ever lukewarm to the American cause. After the city surrendered to Clinton he changed the name of his sheet to the *Royal Gazette*.

I knew the spirits of the Whigs would rise from the depths of despair to the pinnacles of hope when they heard of Marion's audacious successes. I also knew the Tory gentlemen would lose some of their smugness and begin to fear they might have to pay the scores marked up against them.

My uncle drained his goblet and mumbled:

"Eh, lad; two fights in less than two days! Marion won both. What a man!"

He bent his craggy brows in a scowl, picked up a pipe but forgot to light it.

"It doesn't matter," I listlessly remarked, heartsick of the whole business. "It's all wasted. There's no chance of it growing into anything big."

"Short-sighted like your father's people," he muttered. "The longer this trouble lasts the more the rebels will get out of it. And there'll be Angus Macson, the big fool, in the front of the fighting, if he hasn't already been scragged. Him and his overgrown boys. It'll be a wonder if that wildcat wench of an Elsie doesn't ride her tacky to the fighting! God knows how your mother could be kin to such!"

"They're your kin as much as my mother's," I reminded.

"Aye, aye. I'm not dodging the blood," he wearily admitted. "We're all kin by the way of Adam. And I'm thinking Angus Macson will be having a long memory. His sons, too; the three of them. Raw-boned giants. Young devils! The maid will be like them; as big as a grenadier, and as coarse. It's ten years since I saw them.

She was a wild spit-fire of a thing then."

"She'd be fourth cousin to my mother and fifth to me," I said, wrinkling my nose as I pictured the Lynch Creek Amazon. "Which means no relation at all. And thank the Lord I shall never have to see them!"

"That's another mess of porridge," mumbled my uncle. "I'm an old man—I look far ahead—I guard against trouble. I'm thinking, Jim, my lad, you'll be doing your old uncle a good turn; one for me, two for yourself. You're my heir, but I must make sure there is something for you to inherit."

"Uncle David, are you crazy? What are you talking about?"

"I'll be getting you a pass through the lines to Williamsburg. You'll be striking Lynch Creek. In back of beyond, somewhere, is Angus Macson's place, if it hasn't been burned. You'll be starting tomorrow morning. You'll say you're visiting some of my properties."

"But why? What for? I want no truck with those barbarians," I cried.

"And you'll be taking Angus Macson fifty pounds— No, no. Well, say thirty then, in hard money. And tell him it's the first chance I've had to send him any."

I wrathfully refused.

"I'll not do it, Uncle David. I'm neither Tory nor Whig."

"——! Be careful! Stop that bellowing, you young fool! This street has many ears," he hissed.

"The whole business makes me sick. I'll not go near those wild people," I finished in a subdued voice.

"That makes it harder for me," he sighed. "I'm getting along in years, but I'll try it. You mind the house while I'm away. If any one asks for me say I'm off to my farms."

He well knew I was not proof against this. His weakness was his strength. Raging and roundly cursing both Whig and Tory, I went to my room and prepared for what I deemed to be the most disagreeable experience of my life. Here was I, James Lance, carrying tribute to a half-tamed backwoodsman and his vicious brood.

A Lance was buying protection from wild men. At that he could not buy it openly, but must truckle and lie and dissemble. If my uncle had not been an old man I would have seen his money-chests emptied into the gutter before I would stoop to such a business. High words, but I was young, also something of a cub, I fear. And the Spanish settlements offered fine openings for the disgruntled.

Next morning early my uncle presented me with two passes obtained by him the night before. One of them was to be shown only when the routine pass was not sufficient. And it spoke well for my uncle's influence at headquarters in that it was signed by Lord Cornwallis himself. He also gave me a sealed writing to be delivered to one Ellis Ambros, who at last report lived near the creek.

When my horse was brought round by a black boy my uncle dived into a closet and after much groaning and sighing brought out a belt containing twenty pounds in hard money. Yes; twenty. For to that sum had the original fifty dwindled. Had I waited another day I have no doubt it would have been ten, perhaps only five pounds. I insisted he make it thirty or forty, declaring I felt ashamed to carry such a meager sum, that it was better to send it by one of his slaves.

"I can't trust a slave. And if I could, I can't trust either Whig or Tory not to steal from him. It's the act of giving that counts lad, rather than the amount given. And twenty pounds is as much a voucher for my good-will as a thousand would be. Don't turn your nose up at it, for it's more than Marion has seen all at one time since the war began. God bless you, and don't get killed if you would be my heir."

Before leaving him, I returned to my room and took twenty pounds of my own and added it to his. If I must go on a fool's errand I would at least dignify my folly.

CHAPTER II

HUNTING FOR MACSONS

THE Williamsburg men were noted for their bravery and brawny physique. Their environment demanded they be excellent horsemen and experts with the rifle. The greater part of them were of Irish blood and not averse to a fight. Many of them had gone north and had joined General Washington's army, being discouraged of finding open fighting in South Carolina. Some of those who remained had signed the declaration of allegiance. The second broadside, styling them traitors and liable to an ignominious death if they refused to take up arms in behalf of his Majesty, had sent them into Marion's tattered ranks.

Their country stretched from the Santee to the Pedee, and until recently they had not eaten the bitter fruit of a land invaded. Then Wemyss, of detestable memory, was sent to teach them a lesson; and finding them ill-prepared to make a united defense, his lane of desolation extended for more than seventy miles into their country and was fully fifteen miles in width. Nor had I proceeded far into the distracted district before beholding evidence of the rapine.

I struck off as if going to Dorchester, now held by the king's troops, and then turned northeast to Strawberry, the scene of many a stirring race in the old days under the supervision of Daniel Ravenel and the Harlestons. War had killed out the sport and supplied a grimmer game in its stead; namely, the efforts of British and Tories to secure possession of some of the famous race-horses. There was Flimnap, that Mr. Quincy saw defeat Little David, spirited away to North Carolina only after a negro groom was hung up and left for dead by the king's troops because he would not reveal the hiding-place of the animal. Crossing the Cooper, I made for Laneu's Ferry on the Santee and entered the zone of Wemyss' cruel activities.

Gaunt chimneys marked the sites where pleasing homes once stood. All barns of rice, as well as rice in the straw, had been destroyed. The live stock had been swept clean. Especially had Wemyss been bent on killing the sheep and burning the looms, so that the people might not clothe themselves. The sheep, shot or bayoneted, had been left to dot the desolated plantations. These sights to me—long shut up in Charleston and an eye-witness to very few horrors of the war—were most depressing.

Still I did not intend that my sympathies should swerve to either side. I would maintain my rôle of onlooker, disgusted with the whole business. What would one have if one rebelled against authority? I asked myself. And I felt contempt for the poor fools incurring such losses because of some megrims over a bit of tax and some stamped paper. The abiding impression, however, was one of bitterness. I resented this blot on nature.

Amiable September should have presented nothing but charming vistas. And my eyes were continually finding the ugly, the hateful, the cruel. Much of it was senseless and reminded me of how Clinton's men had burned the Liberty Tree after Charleston was taken; even grubbing up the roots to make a thorough job of it. By the time I had crossed at Laneu's and was striking into the Kingstree Road, intending to make Black River by a direct course, my heart was gloomy enough.

Small detachments of British troops were occasionally met with, but only once was I questioned, and then it was not necessary to show Lord Cornwallis' pass; for which I was glad as I was beginning to think I preferred being under no obligation to his lordship. As for Ellis Ambros, to whom I was to deliver a note, I knew nothing. My uncle had said he could give me information did I have any trouble in locating the Macson tribe.

I traveled leisurely to carry out the idea of being on my uncle's business. A few miles short of Kingstree I stopped at a humble home and asked accommodations for the night. The only occupants were several children, two young women and an ancient dame. There were but few taverns in the South at that time and these were to be found only in Richmond, Charleston and a few other sizable towns.

Travelers were welcome, however, where sundown found them. When I learned there were no men about the place I would have gone on, but was so earnestly requested to remain by the old woman, who professed great fear of being visited by some lawless body of horsemen, that I dismounted and took my saddle-bags inside.

One of the younger women, dark of eye and something of a shrew in speech, passionately broke out during the humble evening meal and declared it was his Majesty's scheme to have Tory fight Whig and save the expense of sending over more Hessian troops. She added that it made little difference to the ministry how many Americans—whether Tory or Whig—were killed.

The old women eyed me askance, perhaps fearing I was an informer, and did her best to hush up the girl. Surely my trig coat did not proclaim me a swamp-hiding Whig. The girl became silent and withdrew to a corner, sulking and eying me suspiciously. When I came to go next morning they refused my shillings and I was forced to bestow them on the children. The dame followed me to the road and caused me to flush with shame as her cracked old voice begged me not to remember the foolish vaporings of "the child." The blight of deadly fear was burned into their souls and nothing I could say would reassure them.

But the maid's words stuck in my ears. After all, why should English officers care whether the Tories were killed off or not so long as they first knocked the Whigs in the head? And surely the most savage fighting of the war, both North and South, was when neighbor met against neighbor in battle. As the old woman was entering the cabin I bethought me to inquire concerning Ellis Ambros, and cantered back and asked her if she knew where I could find him. The query threw her into a panic, and with much tossing of thin arms she wailed:

"If you're bound for the hole of the White Fox then God help us! Ask for him of any redcoat after you make Lynch's Creek, but if you have any sisters forget the foolish things the child inside has said."

This reception of my question made me chary of asking directions of others. It was obvious a Whig would not relish my inquiries, and somehow I did not care to be beholden to Tories. However, I need not have worried, for it was not until well advanced toward the creek that I saw any country people, and then they were skulking, furtive figures, usually women, who were gone into the brush like frightened rabbits the moment they sighted me.

I WAS actually relieved when I saw a British sentry beside the road, even though he ordered me to dismount. Back under the trees was a tent and a group of officers lounging on the turf before it drinking from a collection of jugs. These, the sentry informed me, were of the Prince of Wales' Regiment and, as under his direction I advanced toward them, a young officer hurried forward and halted me. He was no older than myself, but his face was flushed with drink and in a loud voice, liberally garnished with oaths, he told me to halt and state my business and then expressed the opinion I was a —— spy.

From the circle a voice called out:

"That's a Charleston coat, Galbarth. Nearly in the mode, too, by gad! Fetch the fellow in."

No one likes to be called a fellow after that fashion and my bile rose as the youngster led me to the circle. I briefly stated how I rode from Charleston, under protection of a pass. Giving my name and address, I produced my routine military pass and handed it over.

A man with gray hair took the paper in a surly manner and carefully examined it. He was a stranger to me, and I must have seen him had he ever been a frequenter of Charleston. I was deciding he had come up from Savannah, when a hullabuloo attracted our attention. Two soldiers were dragging forward a boy. Long ropes were made fast around each of his wrists, and when he had been dragged within a few yards of the officers the ropes were thrown over the bough of a tree. Then one of his guards picked up a heavy whip from the grass and threw off his scarlet coat; and the spectators laughed boisterously at the expression of horror on the boy's face. The prisoner seemed scarcely more than a child and by all tokens of his bearing scarcely better than a half-wit. The gray-haired man finished reading my pass and remarked:

"It seems to be regular enough, but —— my blood if there isn't too much loose running back and forth among you gentry to suit a king's officer!"

This was endorsed with drunken enthusiasm and one man cried out—

"George never did like their kidney."

I had received no affronts in Charleston. My uncle's position was secure, his sympathies were well known. More than one gallant company of officers had he entertained on Tradd Street. Being young and sensitive and easily fired, I exploded—

"My running about is no concern of yours if it suits your commander-in-chief, I fancy."

"——'s fury! The young cock needs to have his comb cut!" snarled the gray-haired man.

"I am here on business which has been approved by your superiors," I persisted.

He gnawed his lips and eyed me ferociously; then slewed around and yelled at the soldiers:

"What are you waiting for? Up with that young devil on his toes and give him his medicine. There are others who need the same rations."

I could not endure to see the miserable creature whipped. The brutality of it nauseated me.

"I am pressed for time. Can't you finish with my business?" I broke in.

He slowly turned his head while the soldiers arranged the two lines over the bough.

"Your business," he whispered, making a great effort to hold his temper in check. "If you condescended to tell my commanding officer your business you've neglected to tell me. So there's nothing to finish. Begone!"

The last was explosive and the rage I had stirred up would be visited upon the prisoner. An inspiration was born, audacious and dangerous, and yet one that must be tried if I would not feel blood-guilt all my life.

"But I need a guide to take me to a certain place," I said.

"Go to the —— and find a guide!" he roared, now free from restraint.

"But my business is urgent. This boy you would whip—let him guide me," I urged, maintaining my composure, but wondrously disturbed inside as I watched his face grow dark with passion.

He smiled cruelly and sneered—

"Aye, you're welcome to his services after we're done with him."

"He'll be small use to me after you've muddled his scant wits with the lash," I protested.

"Now by the ——'s black charger!" choked the officer. "This is too much!"

With a howl of terror the boy yanked the ropes clear of the bough and ran to me and dropped on his knees and threw his arms around my legs.

"On your feet, you —— whelp of a rebel!" roared the officer. "By ——! We'll see if his Majesty's justice is to be diverted by a low country trader! Jipson, get to work!"

"Help! Help!" moaned the boy.

The soldier sought to tear him from me, but the creature was so desperate with fear that he clung like a wildcat, and as his arms pressed about my knees, supplicating me to deliver him, the timidity in my heart vanished, and I was rash enough to say:

"You have examined my military pass, sir, and it seems to have disagreed with you. Be so good as to read this and then decide if your sport is to come ahead of his Majesty's business."

And with a flourish I handed over the few lines directing all officers to pass the bearer and extend any help within reason which might be requested. It was signed by Lord Cornwallis through J. Money, his aid-de-camp. Only powerful influence could have procured it, and at that moment I held my Uncle David in the greatest esteem.

At first I believed the officer would strike me down without bothering to notice the paper. Either his habit of obedience, or curiosity, made him pause. He snatched the paper from my hand and read it with scowling brows.

"It's from the commander-in-chief all right," he mumbled; and the sight of it sobered him tremendously.

To me he said:

"This states you're to be convenienced within reason. Your business must be important. What is it?"

"You should ask Lord Cornwallis that," I gravely replied.

"—— your insolence! Another word and I'll have a double lashing here!"

"George! George!" restrained the man on his right in a shocked voice. "Remember the brandy is in——"

"But who's this young snippet to tell a captain of the Prince of Wales' Regiment whom he'll stretch up and lash, and whom he'll let go with a whole hide?" choked the officer.

"I am only asking for the assistance that that paper is supposed to procure for me," I interrupted. "It's imperative that I have a guide, some one that knows this country intimately. This prisoner looks the part."

"Runty knows! Runty can take you anywhere!" shrilly cried the boy.

"Undoubtedly this fellow deserves a whipping, but he can serve his Majesty best as my guide. After your man gets through with him he'll be of small use to me," I added.

"The young man seems well-spoken," soothed the captain's councilor. "The pass is an order. He's to have whatever assistance he asks for. You're impatient to sample the fat living in Charleston, but you don't want your first visit to come from court-martial proceedings."

"Have done!" snarled the captain. "Curse me, but who says this yowling young Whig is the only one that can guide him? How do you know but what we can send him to his place of business—aye, and furnish an escort if need be? That would be accommodating him and his —— mysterious errand. You, sir, where would you go?"

My hopes sank. Ellis Ambros, being hated by the Whigs, would be well known to the king's men. But the captain was new to the country and it might be his men were in a like ignorance.

"First, I would go to the home of Ellis Ambros," I answered.

"Ugh! The White Fox!" barked the young man who had conducted me to the circle. "It's months since the old White Fox brought us news. He lives——"

"Yes, yes! Where?" eagerly cried the captain, casting me a look of triumph.

The young man stared vacantly from me to his captain, then back again, scratched his head and sheepishly replied—

"He's that sharp in shifting about to dodge Whigs that few of us ever knew where he took to earth, sir."

"Meaning you don't know," said the captain.

Next he canvassed his companions, then had inquiries made of the soldiers. But while all knew about the White Fox and attributed to him a strong influence in behalf of the king, none could tell his abode.

"Let this fellow give directions for getting there and his sentence shall be cut in half," sullenly said the captain.

But the prisoner would have none of such a proposition.

"Runty can't tell till turned loose," he insisted and renewing the pressure about my legs.

"There's plenty of more Whigs to be whipped, George," soothed the peacemaker. "This brat will be falling into our hands again within twenty-four hours."

The arms about my legs trembled at this.

"His lordship has a most damnably cranky temper at times. Let's be rid of this young gentleman and the idiot, and get back to the jugs."

THE captain vowed that if his lordship could string up a baker's dozen of rebels at Camden, as he had done after Gates' defeat, then an officer of the Prince of Wales' Regiment surely could whip one surly Whig cub to make him point out the trail to Marion's hiding-place. But this ranting merely marked the running-down of his black humor. Even the forlorn creature at my knees must have sensed the truth, for the grip of his arms relaxed.

Finishing his tirade, the captain stared malevolently at the simple face of the prisoner, then rose and made for the tent, calling back over his shoulder:

"Let the —— hatchet-face take his prize and begone. And if he doesn't like my speech he can report it to his lordship. I find there's nothing in the order to make me butter my words to him."

"I'll have him out when I get to Charleston," solemnly declared young Galbarth.

The gentleman who had interceded hurriedly drew me aside, the boy keeping at my heels, and showed a desire to mollify me by saying:

"Captain Tans has had a cup or two. Aside from that he has much cause for his temper. We caught this brat and had high hopes of learning from him where Mr. Marion is hiding. Naturally we're disappointed. However, take him along unwhipped, and when next in Charleston I shall make it my pleasure to call on you. I'm Lieutenant Chats, at your service."

"You will be welcome," I heartily assured him and I gave him our address on Tradd Street. "But I must confess I've small hankering to know Captain Tans any better."

Then to the boy:

"Come along, young sir. You're to lead the way."

"Twig a stout tickler of brandy before you go," urged Lieutenant Chats. "We've swept the countryside pretty clean. It's a few jugs you'll be finding— Just to show there's no offense held for the captain's words. He's impulsive and has been sorely tried. But his heart's in the right place."

"Give me a mug," I agreed. The rest of the circle gathered about to participate in the ceremony, and my mug clicked against theirs and I threw off a small dram. Then with my best bow I mounted my horse and rode off, the boy running at my stirrup, half-crouching as if expecting a blow, his big black eyes at times staring foolishly up at me through a web of long black hair.

After we had won clear of the camp I asked—

"You know the country around here?"

"Oh, la! Dear me, sir! That I do," he babbled proudly. "I can run all day and see only places I know."

"But you wouldn't tell them where Marion hides."

He straightened and peered into my face as if wishing to study me and blankly answered:

"But who knows where the swamp-fox hides? No one. La, sir! His own men search for days sometimes to find him."

"You heard me speak of Ellis Ambros to the king's officers?"

"Heart alive! The White Fox! Few want to go near him!"

"But you'll take me to him as I saved you from a whipping."

With a thin, cackling laugh the creature doubled far over, then threw up his head and shook the hair back from his face, and began a grotesque dance ahead of me, chanting:

"He'd see the White Fox! He'd see the old Fox!"

"Shut up!" I roared. "Or I'll take you back and have you stripped and whipped."

He scuttled to my stirrup, his wild gaze sweeping the road ahead and behind, and then searching the woods on either hand.

Wishing to calm him, I asked—

"What's your name, lad?"

"La me! I'm a simple, they say. But I know things. Some call me Runty. But I can see things. Him in the brave coat will give you your needings if he catches you alone."

"Perhaps it'll be the other way round," I muttered. "You live near here?"

"I do and I don't. It's the way of thinking. When at home I live over beyond Lynch Creek. But that's not often. I live in the woods. I live in the swamps and hills. Once I was in the High Hills of Santee. Now I'm afraid of that place. What are you called?"

"James Lance."

"*Eheel*" he giggled. "That's a funny name. And you're a Tory."

"Neither Whig nor Tory."

"You're not half-wit. No matter how the cat jumps you won't get scratched."

His admiration for my astuteness was disagreeable. Although a simpleton he took it for granted my neutrality was a reflection of timidity. I fixed my gaze on the road ahead and ignored him. He chattered on, speaking much nonsense, calling to the birds and pretending he understood them. Suddenly he declared—

"You were Tory enough to save my life."

"To save your hide," I idly corrected as I twisted my head to study a slight movement in the bushes on my right. My guide sounded a shrill howl and dashed into the cover. Supposing he had deserted me, I angrily yelled for him to come back. He seemed to be gone for good, and I was nearly a mile farther on my journey, and traveling at haphazard, when he startled me by jumping from the bushes and resuming his place at my side.

"Where the ——'s name did you go to?" I demanded. "I'd have done better to have left you to be whipped."

He grimaced through his tangled hair and with a snicker answered—

"I've been saving your head from a handful of buckshot, my pretty Tory."

As he spoke he was pointing to the crest of a low hill, where the timber gave way and I beheld several men, all armed, walking into the sky-line.

"Rebels!" I muttered, wondering if indeed I owed my life to the disheveled creature at my side.

"Whigs," he corrected with a foolish chuckle. "They watched you enter the Britishers' camp. They was waiting for you, and they'd have shot you and taken your pretty papers if not for Runty. I told them you saved me from a whipping. La, young sir! But they did hanker to see the color of your blood."

"For a half-wit you have strange influence with Lynch Creek men," I remarked.

He stared at me vacuously for a moment as if to get my meaning, then retorted:

"Every one knows poor Runty. Sometimes I can tell them things about the redcoats. But if you'd been a Tory they'd had a smash at you. Being neither, they said they'd save their lead for something worth while."

"It's easy to shoot a man from ambush. Both Whig and Tory are up to that sort of a game, it seems. Neither side seems to have any stomach for a meeting in the open."

And my hand went to one of the long pistols in the saddle-holster.

"Ho! ho! Young blood and hot blood! Damme, as daddy says; you'll be blooded before you leave these parts; for you'll be fighting both Whig and Tory."

"Enough of your rattle. Tell me where Angus Macson lives," I abruptly commanded.

He leaped sidewise and tilted his head to peer up cunningly into my face; then turned a cart-wheel, causing my horse to shy, and was back at my stirrup, answering—

"They live where they can do the most mischief to the king's men."

"But that's not telling me where I can find them."

"You are going to the White Fox. It's bad to mix visits to the old Fox with visits to the Macsons."

"But you can lead me to the Macsons," I coaxed.

"They would kill you. They would whip me," he protested. "Big Simon is quick with his blows. No, no. My bargain was to take you to the Fox. I'll do that if his yellow neck hasn't been stretched by this time."

I saw it was useless to attempt exacting from him any information concerning my distant kinsmen. I did learn that Big Simon was the elder of the three Macson boys. As to the girl, or old Angus, I could not even ascertain if they be yet alive. Could I have learned the way to them I proposed sparing myself any contact with old Ambros. I became silent and paid no heed to his patter of curious questions until he, too, subsided. My horse was ambling along peacefully when the impy suddenly seized my nag by the nose and before I could make a move had backed him violently into the bushes.

"Now, what—" I began, raising my crop.

He put a finger to his lips and with the stealth of a weasel parted the bushes and peered down the road. I made to spur from cover, but with unexpected strength he forced my mount back and was whispering:

"For your life be quiet! Like yourself they're neither Tory nor Whig. Only they're devils!"

"What are you talking about, you loony? Is there some one holding the road against me?" I asked, slipping from the saddle and taking a pistol with me.

"Ganner's Regulators," he muttered, staring through the bush screen with all his eyes.

Even we in Charleston had heard much about Chace Ganner's "Regulators." Citizens in the back districts had early formed bands of "regulators" to discourage horse-stealing and robbery. The adventurer, Ganner, had taken the name for his band of cutthroats. They looted and killed both Whig and Tory, playing themselves off at times as a partisan Whig band, and again masquerading as independent Tory horse. The boy's warning cooled my ardor a bit for returning to the road.

I BEGINNING to realize that despite his addled brain the boy possessed the natural cunning of an animal, I cautiously parted the bushes. Some distance down the road and standing well back from it and half-concealed by the woods was a small log cabin. In front of the cabin were four mounted men and one of them was waving a noosed rope. Standing before the door, which was closed, was a tall, thin man with white hair and a long white beard. Even at that distance the horsemen looked very ferocious with their bristling whiskers and long hair and odds and ends of armament.

"Those are some of the Regulators?" I whispered.

"La, yes! They'll be Ganner's men. Daddy says he hunts with the hounds and runs with the hares and takes what he can from both sides. They'll use but one rope in tucking the White Fox up."

"Is that Ellis Ambros? Do they think to hang him?"

"God's mercy, yes. I've been telling you. Well, well. He's very old. He must die some time."

"You bloodthirsty young devil!" I whispered.

He placed two fingers to his lips and sounded a peculiar whistle. The effect of this on the horsemen was remarkable. The man holding the rope dropped it and swung a long duck-gun around in our direction. His companions spurred back to the road. Ambros opened the door behind him and leaped through it. The man with the duck-gun swung it about to pot the old man. I read the fellow's purpose even as he was getting the cumbersome weapon into line, and jumping from the bushes, I let drive at him with the pistol.

As I fired the boy gave a loud yell. The four men discharged their pieces at me, but what with the prancing and rearing of their horses the buckshot and swanshot rattled overhead. I ran back and mounted and as I gained the road the four were tearing down upon me. The man with the duck-gun was in the lead. He pulled a pistol and

I flattened out on my nag's neck as he fired. I gave him my second pistol and he went to earth.

A moment later another of the outlaws was upon me, his pistol ready, but the boy in the edge of the bushes hurled a rock and caught the rascal on the head, and as he galloped by me without attempting to shoot, I saw his face and neck were red with blood.

The other two jerked their horses about and started toward the creek. Although unarmed, I rode after them, thinking to gain the shelter of the cabin where I could recharge my weapons. But they were not to escape, for as they were passing the cabin the door swung open and six long tawny forms leaped out and took after them. I saw one of them pulled from his saddle and die hideously in the road. The other disappeared around the bend before he was finished, and I heard his terrible cries and could visualize his fate.

Weak with horror, I turned in toward the cabin. Three men had died inside of as many minutes, including the first man I ever had killed. It was not until I was dismounting that I noticed the old man was aiming a long horse-pistol at me.

"This is Ellis Ambros?" I asked in a voice that must have trembled.

"Who are you?" he truculently demanded, still pointing the pistol.

"I'm the man who tried to save you from being hung," I faintly replied.

"You shot from the bushes. I saw you," he mumbled, lowering his weapon. "I thank you. But the young ragamuffin at your side helped in the good work. His signal made them think the Whig partisans were upon them. They've been up to mischief across the creek. That's why they galloped toward you. They did not care to return to the creek."

"They proposed to hang you," I said with a shudder and staring at the long rope.

"They offered to spare me if I'd give up a large store of gold which I haven't got and never had," he grimly replied. "How do you come by my name? I never saw you before."

I glanced about for the boy, but he was not in sight. I called lustily for him to come to me and was answered by a wild burst of laughter deep in the woods.

"He's gone. Good riddance to the young devil," snarled Ambros. "But you? Again I say, what do you want?"

"I come from David Macson, my uncle. I bring a writing to you," I explained.

He eyed me thoughtfully; then motioned me to enter the cabin. He left the door open and stood where he could watch the road.

"Speak briskly," he ordered. "The Swamp Fox has taken up quarters on Snow's Island, and that's too near to suit the White Fox."

This was almost a boast and he showed some yellow teeth in an ugly grin as he said it.

As I was removing my uncle's message from the lining of my coat-skirt I remarked—

"A narrow squeak for you."

"Pooh! They were trash."

"Still they were about to hang you."

"You're forgetting my pets," he reminded with a sly grin. He whistled shrilly and I heard a rapid *patter, patter*, in the road. The next moment the cabin was alive with the huge dogs, their jowls red with the blood of the banditti. They seemed divided between desire to caress their master and a longing to fall on me and finish me. I stood mighty still while he spoke to them sharply until they were crouched on their bellies, their red eyes glaring a me hungrily. Ambros then took the message from me and tearing it open read it hurriedly. Finishing it, he carefully replaced it in his coat and began:

"You're David Macson's nephew sure enough," he mumbled. "It would be a bad business if the young relative of my Tory friend should be chewed up by my Tory pets."

He sharply called one of the brutes by name and it sidled up to me. I was wishing my pistols were reloaded, but Ambros placed a hand on my shoulder and talked to the blood-stained devil. Obviously I was presented as a friend, for after a few sniffs the dog crawled behind me and crouched at my heels, his stained jowls resting on his paws. One by one the other dogs were called forward until all had paid homage to me.

"You see I wasn't in danger of being hung after all," he chuckled. "I'll admit they took me by surprize and they might have shot me before my pets could get to work. That's why I didn't open the door and call them out. I was waiting for the one supreme moment when I could get the rascals off their guard; then my pets would have been at their throats— But to your business. David Macson says you're to be put in the way of finding Angus Macson, or some of his boys. I don't envy you your business with them. And I'll say it would be a peculiar accommodation to ask of me, the White Fox, if any but Davie asked it. But he ever had a long head and he's too stanch a Tory to go wrong."

"This whole affair is very disagreeable to me," I said.

He did not seem to hear me but, speaking more to himself than to me, continued:

"It must be David's way of making himself safe— A poor way to my mind. I'll never trim my sails. I'll run from the Swamp Fox but I'll never be fool enough to think I can buy his favor. But as a young man David was overcautious. That's why he never took a wife. He's snug in Charleston and nothing can harm him, yet he sends you to build breastworks where there'll be no fighting. I'm a better Tory than either you or your uncle."

"Better than I by all means," I readily agreed. "I'm neutral."

His mouth flopped open in amazement, then he began laughing in a broken treble, and with much jeering in his thin voice he jibed:

"Neutral! That's smashing good! Well, well, my young neutral, either Tory or Whig will win this fight, and neutrals won't be thought as well of as a whipped enemy when it's all finished."

"Will you tell me how to reach my distant kinsmen, the Angus Macsons?" I asked. He screwed up his thin face in a frown and ponderously informed me:

"If any but David asked it I'd report him in Charleston. But he always has some reason, even if a foolish one. His loyalty is too well proven. Reach the Macson cabin? Oh, aye. Reach Macson in person? It would take the —— with Marion's permission to do that if he happens to be at Snow's Island. And don't think your relationship will save you if Angus be in a bad mood. Your uncle is foolish to send you across the creek if he wants you to be his heir."

"Then I do cross the creek?" I impatiently demanded.

"Young blood and poor manners," he gravely remarked. Then pointing to the road, he instructed me:

"Follow it till you strike the creek. Follow up on this side of the creek until you come to a shallow ford. You can't miss it as it's marked by flat stones on the bank. Cross at the ford and follow the bank upstream. That's all."

"But how will I know when I've come to the Macson place?"

"Before you get there he or one of his boys will hold you up at the muzzle of a gun. Don't be afraid you'll miss their place. They'll have you spotted and standing with hands over your head long before you sight the clearing."

All of which was rather discouraging to one bent on visiting a distant kinsman for the purpose of presenting him with forty pounds of good money. I mounted and rode slowly toward the creek.

On reaching the bend beyond which one of Ganner's men had died, I looked back and beheld the White Fox making off down the road in the opposite direction, his six savage guardians trailing along in sinister single file behind him. He was hurrying away to avoid Marion's men. And I wished my errand was finished and, like the White Fox, I was turning my face toward Charleston. Then I rode around the bend and saw the fearful shape in the road, and, averting my eyes, sent my horse on a mad gallop toward the creek.

CHAPTER III

A FAMILY DISUNION

SUMTER was out of the fighting with a wound in his chest. Gates' scattered troops were collecting at Hillsborough preliminary to moving to Charlotte in North Carolina to meet their new commander General Greene of Rhode Island. The brilliant Arnold, after five years of loyalty, had proved himself a traitor and was now a high officer in the British army. Count de Rochambeau, with fleet and army, had come to aid General Washington. The total results of the Summer campaign, following the miserable Winter at Morristown, the depreciation of the currency almost to the vanishing-point, and the intense suffering of the Army and people, gave the patriots small food for comfort.

South Carolina was subdued. Ganner's Regulators and similar lawless bodies of men were beginning to advertise themselves as Tories, for fear of the king's vengeance. Horse-thieves and robbers were most venomous in their activities; and if it were not for Marion, encamped on Snow's Island, one would not truthfully claim there was any opposition to the British arms. And as my Uncle David had said:

"Why do they fight? They love their women and children. They had homes——"

Well, I could see a reason for fighting in the last. They had had homes. Bread and butter again; and the homes were destroyed, their women and children scattered. My Lords Rawdon and Cornwallis, through such brutal campaigners as Tarleton and Wemyss, had gone too far. Fix a man's punishment so that he has nothing to hope for and the inclination to penitence ends.

When I was a mere lad the larger number of king's officers sent to our towns were genial fellows and well liked. During the Revolution there were many such. But, also, there were some who seemed to lust in their power and to rival one another in inflicting cruelties.

They were foolish enough to imagine they could break the spirit of the people by frightening them with imprisonments and hangings. Never were the relations between mother-country and province more amiable than those existing between South Carolina and England prior to the war. This fine spirit was killed by the atrocities of some of his Majesty's representatives.

When I reached the creek I had arrived at two conclusions without being conscious of any analytical reasoning. These were: Did England win she must hold by might, for the harassed would have long memories; unless she could win this year, when the sorrows and hardships of the States had reached a climax she could never win.

The last thought gave me a peculiar feeling and I found myself groping about in a jungle of speculations. If the royal arms lost out I would be living in a new world—and would I fit in? Uncle David could accept such a situation by giving a cheer for his Excellency, General Washington, Congress and liberty forever, followed by handing out some of his many pounds. Such a face-about would scarcely do for a young man of rather proud spirit, who found it obnoxious and smacking of truckling to carry forty pounds to a kinsman. I smiled grimly as I recalled the dead man down the road; at least I knew I was against Ganner's Regulators and all other outlaws.

Those born since the war may view this inability to choose sides whole-heartedly in the conflict as an abnormal attitude. But not so. What is difficult for the younger generation to understand is the sincerity on both sides; for sincerity was there in Whig and Tory, just as was meanness, betrayal, and foul murder. The ferocity with which Whig and Tory fought each other is an evidence of that sincerity and is a characteristic of all fratricidal strifes. That loyalist and patriot were honest in their beliefs is further shown by the fact that after peace was declared they settled down again as neighbors to live in amity.

So, if certain phases of the war, as waged by both sides, repelled me and caused me to stand neutral, it should be charged up against my narrow point of view. When shut up in Charleston for the first years of the war, I was influenced by the Whigs' manning their guns on Gadsden's wharf, Governor's Bridge and the Exchange, at the Old Magazine and Cummings' Point on the west, and the works to the north of the city opposing the redoubts, approaches and batteries of the besiegers.

This environment naturally would have made a rabid Whig of me, but for two counter-influences: I sorrowed over the upset of my educational program and I marveled at South Carolina's policy of temporizing and her glaring indecision. This last convinced me the rebellion would not be fought to a finish but was intended to force advantages and benefits from the Crown.

I was barely eighteen when Clinton captured the city. During those first three months of British occupancy my uncle and I received nothing except courteous treatment. If we heard harsh stories of Tory treatment, so also was told much about Whig cruelties. It was commonly believed that neither side bothered to take prisoners.

As I turned up the south bank of the creek immediate problems pressed for attention. There were my papers. While my uncle had neglected to advise me as to their disposition once I was through the British lines, I had sense enough to realize a pass signed by Cornwallis was a poor introduction to any wandering band of partisans of the Whig complexion. So I took a spare neckerchief from my saddle-bag and wrapped them up and had them ready when I spied a good hiding-place.

It was only a few miles to the ford spoken of by Ambros; the flat stones on the bank forming a paved way to the water's edge and continuing as far as my gaze could penetrate the shallows. Turning into this, my horse soon was scrambling up the bank, and I was afoot and tucking my papers into a hole at the bottom of a tree.

Now I felt more free and my spirits plucked up a bit. This was partisan country. Tory bands might ride through it but they lingered at their peril. Below me on Snow's Island was Marion and his ragged following. He might have a hundred men, or only a handful; for his men were allowed to go home at times when worry over their defenseless families or their meager crops made them poor soldiers.

What I could not understand was the mighty impetus that sent them back to him once they had satisfied themselves that all was well at home. They received no money. Their living was of the scantiest and coarsest. They were without blankets except as they captured British wagon-trains. Scarlet cloth was practically the only kind one could procure after the surrender of Charleston; and the partisans wore this and some were executed for spies. Others dyed the cloth with roots, but the first rains would restore it to its original color.

I glanced down at my own coat and wished I had dressed more somberly, albeit I had selected the soberest in my wardrobe. When I lifted my eyes it was to look into the muzzle of a rifle thrust through the bushes and within fifteen feet of my head. I stopped my horse.

"DISMOUNT!" ordered a gruff voice.

I obeyed, looking in vain for a glimpse of the rifleman.

"Who are you? Where do you come from? Where are you bound for?"

"James Lance. From Charleston. To see my kinsman Angus Macson."

"A brave and pretty gentleman," mocked the voice, and this time the timbre was soft as velvet.

"You'll be no man!" I cried, stepping toward the bushes.

"You'll be no living man if you come another foot."

I retreated to my horse and waited. The gun waved a bit, then became steady, and I found myself compelled to stare into the brown muzzle although it was the last thing I wished to look at. Then to my astonishment a low laugh sounded at my side and I jerked my head about to meet the dark eyes of a smiling girl. She wore a frock of deerskin, worked smooth and soft. The skirt was scarcely more than knee-length and was of linsey-woolsey and was met by high leggings of leather. On her feet she wore moccasins of Cherokee make.

"Who is your companion?" I asked, sweeping my hat low and making my best bow to her and then to the menacing rifle.

"So you are James Lance, nephew of David Macson," she mused, resting her hands on her hips and staring curiously up into my face.

"That I am, sweetheart. And who may you be?" I countered.

"I mayn't be your sweetheart, and it's foolish and worse to waste words on this side of Lynch Creek," she coldly warned.

"Puritan people," I laughed, for her severity was so pronounced as to suggest mischievous laughter just under the surface. "Do we remain here, or does your friend behind the rifle give us leave to move on?"

She glided forward and took the gun by the muzzle and drew it from the bushes.

"You were the one in there. You alone!" I exclaimed.

"One is never alone when one has a rifle and knows how to use it," she replied. "Mount and ride ahead till you strike a path leading to the right."

"Where are you taking me?"

"Where you will meet Angus Macson. That coat won't become you in his eyes when he thinks of what Marion's men have to wear."

"Would my going in rags put proper coats on their backs?" I inquired as my horse walked along the bank.

"If you gave them the difference between rags and such clothes as you wear, yes. But we don't ask for gay coats and breeches. We're glad to get half a blanket."

I glanced back at her and wondered of whom she reminded me. The resemblance was fleeting, a hint, a suggestion as evasive as a shadow. Yet it seemed it was some one I had met recently. This notion was dispelled in a flash and I knew she reminded me of my little mother, whose portrait was done by Theus thirty years before. There was the same irresistible dimple near the corner of the mouth that made one think she was perpetually restraining herself from laughter. There was the same amused lift of the brows. Yet in the face was that which I had never seen in my mother's portrait, a level quality of gaze at times which was almost masculine in its steadiness.

She flushed under my repeated scrutiny and demanded—

"Why do you look at me like that?"

"You remind me of some one," I answered, but reluctant to bring in my mother's name in talking with this wild woods girl.

"You're riding by the path. Turn to the right," she ordered.

Wheeling into the path, which was masked by bushes, I rode on for a few rods. The girl whistled softly and a horse crashed through the undergrowth to her side. She leaped into the saddle, riding astride.

"Who are you?" I asked, finding it hard to keep my head turned to the front.

"Never mind names, my fine gentleman," she saucily returned. "Just now I'm your captor."

"As I come willingly and bring something for Angus Macson it's a poor return to call me a prisoner."

"Others have come willingly, who would have gone away willingly, only their business was not to the advantage of these United States."

This new name for the old Thirteen Colonies thrilled me. One never heard the States thus spoken of in Charleston. They were always styled "colonies." There was much presumption and no little charm in the new title, however. I began to understand that did one have any equity in erecting this new republic his pride would naturally soar high. My second thought should have been my first; namely, that she was hinting I was a spy.

This suspicion was so ridiculous that I smiled broadly. What was there to spy upon? A raw country where families went hungry unless some of the men managed to shoot some squirrels, or other small game; where the women worked and grubbed in the fields to supply the meagerest of foods; where the soldiery was a rabble, now convening, now scattering to cover. The girl noted my amusement and her small features grew hard with resentment. In a voice not quite steady she demanded—

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen this Fall."

"——'s mercy! And boys of fifteen are doing men's work! And you call yourself a man!"

This rubbed the grin from my face and I twisted in my saddle and began:

"My errand here is soon done. I don't come to harm the Macsons——"

"Good! good!" she jeered. "The kind gentleman of eighteen Summers promises not to harm the Macsons."

"—and I resent the welcome extended to me by you, who take it on yourself to represent the Macsons."

"Having said which, you'll face about to the front and soon have an opportunity to make your talk with the Macsons, for we are about there."

We were there with a vengeance; for scarcely had she spoken than a monstrous big fellow—and I was no weakling in bone and beef—burst through the growth and had me by the collar of my decent coat and had yanked me to the ground. As I lighted on my feet I twisted free by leaving a piece of the collar in his fist and dodging his second onrush I gave him a buffet on the head. With a roar that would have done credit to a bull of Bashan he came at me again, his hand gripping a long knife such as the country butchers used. But now the girl had recovered from her astonishment and had sent her horse in between us and was shrilly crying:

"Keep back, Simon! Keep back, I say!"

The horse was an effectual barrier for a few moments and I had time to observe my assailant in detail. Not less than six-feet-four did he stand, with a pirate's beard and a bewildering thatch of black hair.

"Curse the sprig! I'll do him out for that blow!" he hoarsely bawled, circling to get at me.

But now other figures were entering on the scene and one of them, a large man with snow-white hair and beard, rumbled an oath and fiercely commanded:

"Have done, Simon! What's all this how-d'y'do about?"

"About a miserable spy in a fine coat which I've spoiled," yelled Simon.

"Not so fast," broke in the girl, cleverly backing her horse and keeping him from me. "It's a messenger to you, daddy."

"Eh? To me? I'm receiving fine company," growled the old man. "What's your business with me?"

"Let it wait till I've settled my business with him!" insisted Simon.

"Tom! Dick! If your brother doesn't behave lam him over the head with your gun-barrels," ordered the old man.

Tom and Dick were younger than Simon and while finely developed fellows were nowhere near his equal in bulk. Immediately obedient to the command, they raised their guns as clubs and maneuvered until Simon was between them. That he had no doubt as to their readiness to strike him down if he did not subside was shown by his coming to a halt and staring at me ferociously. Events had happened so rapidly I was just beginning to catch up with them in my mind, and in amazement I asked the girl—

"Is your name Elsie Macson?"

"Never mind her name. Your business is with me, Angus Macson," said the old man, bending his shaggy white brows on me in no amiable fashion. "Who are you?"

"This will be James Lance, a nephew of David Macson," spoke up the girl. "I found him wandering up the creek. He said he must see you, daddy."

So she was the Elsie my uncle had seen eight years ago; but she was not as big as a grenadier, nor as coarse.

"James Lance— He'll be Esther's son," mumbled the old man. "Well, he sees me."

"That old red-backed scut of a David doesn't dare pay us a visit," cried one of the younger boys.

"Not much inducement for any branch of the family to come here," I hotly retorted.

"Certainly none has been offered," mocked the girl.

"Be still with your yapping," roared Angus. Then to me:

"If you're James Lance tell your errand. These three are my sons. She is my daughter, Elsie—all cousins of yours in a roundabout way."

THE girl was close to me, still keeping her horse between me and her big brother, and as she cast a demure glance into my face and the dimple came and went I forgot my last ungallant speech and offered to give her a cousinly salute. Her horse bore her one side and she was coldly saying:

"You ride too fast, Cousin James Lance. Brothers are cutting each other's throats hereabouts. Cousins needs to be well acquainted before they buss."

"No inducements, Squire Lance!" guffawed Dick.

Old Angus pulled at his beard, and studying my crimson face, shrewdly reminded me:

"We know nothing about you, young sir. But we do know that David Macson is a disgrace to the name. He comforts the enemy and lives in luxury with the redcoats while those who should be his own people starve."

"Not that we want his help," spoke up the girl.

Big Simon passionately consigned him to the ——. I defended him.

"My uncle is getting along in years. To fight in the field is out of the question. Why should he lose all his gear when it will gain him nothing? He has no complaint to make of his treatment at the hands of his Majesty's forces in Charleston."

"—— him for a turncoat!" cried Simon. "He'd sell his soul to save his silver."

"Hush, Simon. Have done," rebuked his father, speaking as if the giant were a child. "Now we come to you, James Lance, son of Esther Macson; this being your first visit to Lynch Creek we're curious to know your business."

"I bring a belt from my uncle," I said, dropping into the speech of the Cherokees, who were forever bringing belts and axes to the frontier.

"To make the road smooth and lay down a white path," gibed Tom.

Without heeding him, I stripped off the money-belt and tossed it to the old man's feet. There was no mistaking the musical clink, and do his best, Angus could not quell the glint of interest lighting his eyes. He felt of the belt thoughtfully but did not open it.

"This will be hard money," he mused.

"Buying favor!" barked Simon.

"You flatter yourself," I said.

"——! Shut up, the two of you," bellowed the old man. "It's nothing but talk, talk, talk from morning till night. Have you anything else to say, James Lance?"

"My uncle is an old man and unlike you people his years ride him hard," I replied. "I did not want to come here. He said if I didn't he would make the trip himself. So I am here."

"He's a spy," accused Simon. "On his way here he visited old Ellis Ambros. He's a spy, —— him!"

"Be still," commanded Angus, yet his eyes were malevolent as they swerved back to me.

"I called on Ambros to learn how to get here," I explained. "I had a half-wit for a guide part of the way; Runty, he called himself. I saved him from a whipping at an outpost of British officers. He refused to fetch me here; so I asked old Ambros. He was almost as civil as you folks are."

They remained silent for nearly a minute, looking at one another and then at me. Finally old Angus asked—

"You travel with a pass, then?"

"Surely; else I never would have reached Lynch Creek."

"Let me see your papers."

"I haven't them. They'd be dangerous to carry once I got outside the British lines."

"If he saved Runty from a whipping it was part of the game between him and the redcoats," spoke up Simon. "I tell you he's a spy. I owe him for a blow. I'll tear that smart coat from his back."

"The half-wit was in limbo before I stumbled on to the British post," I corrected.

Old Angus motioned me to be silent, and said:

"Let there be no more talk of spies and spying—not just yet. There's nothing here for a spy to learn and peddle to old Cornwallis, the rat! Come, James Lance, we'll go to the cabin and eat and think things over. And you, Simon, hold your jaw and your hands till told to do different. Tom, lead the young man's horse."

No haste thus far to greet me as a cousin. And in silent procession we passed deeper into a stand of pine, blue-black and noble of girth, until we came to a clearing and a substantial double log cabin. Here the girl disappeared while Tom took my horse to a hovel. I went inside with the old man and threw my saddle and bags in one corner. Dick was keen to admire my two long pistols, the silver mountings catching his eye. He and Tom were about of an age, fine, strapping, good-natured appearing young men.

After the horse was cared for the two seated themselves in the doorway and exchanged grins as they watched the sour face of Simon. Old Angus ruled the roost in true patriarchal style and insisted on obedience from the eldest as well as the youngest of the boys. As for the girl, I fancied she had things much her own way. Angus still held the money-belt, and more than once I observed his fingers seeking to estimate the contents. But he did not open it.

We had been in the cabin but a few minutes when a negro brought in a huge platter of hot journey-cake, and another of smoking lean beef, and placed them on the table. For drink there was nothing but water. Old Angus called us to the table, but the girl did not appear. We were in the men's section of the long cabin, the furnishings being those of war and the chase, and the disorder quite remarkable.

I glanced expectantly toward the other end of the cabin, curtained off with deerskins, hoping to see her emerge. We were not to be favored with her company, however. Her father evidently did not expect her as without waiting for her to appear he began what proved to be an exceedingly long grace for such poor provender, and we fell to. Simon ate with his eyes on the table, still scowling in rage over my blow. Toward the end of the meal I surprized him glancing stealthily at my torn coat, nor did his gaze indicate pleasure at the damage he had done. I could almost imagine that for the moment he had forgotten his rancor. Young Dick gave me a possible clue when he said with a snicker:

"Simon's learning the latest Charleston fashions. He'll be getting him a coat like that."

Simon glared across the table at his brother and Angus' deep voice boomed—

"Boy, keep shut."

"Where is Miss Elsie?" I made bold to inquire.

Angus shrugged his shoulders and continued eating as if not hearing me. Tom diffidently asked—

"What do they say of the war in Charleston?"

"I only hear the Tory side of it," I frankly confessed.

"Get out where there are fighting Whigs and you'd hear t'other side of it," remarked Dick.

"You bring me money—hard money—and yet you're a Tory," commented Angus, suspending eating to eye me curiously.

"And a spy!" shot in Simon.

"I'm not a Tory. Neither am I a Whig," I declared. "I've lived in Charleston ever since my mother died, which was when I was very young. I've seen and heard things on both sides which make me sick of the war."

Old Angus was frankly amazed.

"God 'a' mercy!" he gasped. "Sitting on the fence! How can that be possible?"

"Haven't you heard how Adam Cusac was hung at Cheraw court-house by that skunk Wemyss?" hotly asked young Dick.

"And how John Wiley, the sheriff of Camden, was killed in his own doorway by Captain Tuck, with Lord Cornwallis standing within a few hundred feet of him?" passionately added Tom.

"Let be!" harshly commanded their father. "More than one patriot has been knocked into irons and tucked up to a tree, and more will follow; but we'll not go into that now. Young sir, in the morning I'll dispose of your case. Don't leave the clearing."

"My case?" I cried. "Good —— man! Am I up for trial?"

"That'll be decided later," was the imperturbable reply. "David Macson is a weak, silver-loving critter. I hope no harm will come to Esther Macson's son." Thus did he always mention my mother by her maiden name, and never recognizing her marriage to my father.

THUS was I received at the home of my distant relatives. The one touch that would have tended to make the situation endurable was missing. I wandered into the clearing and kept the tail of my eye on the cabin, hoping to see her slim form. The Theus' portrait of my mother and the piquant face of the girl were strangely mixed in my mind. At times I could see them side by side, then again they were one. The family retired early, making my experience all the more discomforting, for we kept no such barnyard hours in Charleston; and I smiled ruefully as I recalled the gallant occasions when the St. Cecilia Society gave its concerts.

There was one incident, however, that surprized and mystified me. I had taken a couch of robes at one end of the cabin and was fighting myself against wakefulness when a slight movement in the room caught my ear. The men had retired to the loft and were snoring lustily and for a moment I believed it must be my fair cousin either entering or leaving the room.

I remained very quiet and kept my eyes closed. Soft steps approached and for a few moments I could feel I was being scrutinized. Then the steps receded and I opened my eyes. My disappointment was ludicrous, for I was beholding the gigantic form of Simon Macson instead of the slight, boyish figure of his sister. He was standing before the fireplace and the glow from the coals made his face stand out in ruddy bas-relief. I felt for my pistols, thinking he had come to kill me; but as I realized how he had had his chance when he stood by my couch I grew ashamed of the suspicion and remained content to watch him.

Now he puzzled me by his attitude and actions. He knelt before the fireplace and began stroking something gently. As he shifted his position my mouth flew open and I stared incredulously. He had my coat in his hands and was gently examining the fabric. First I thought he was trying to mend the collar he had so sadly torn; next I was accusing him of searching the pockets. More careful study satisfied me neither of these suspicions was correct.

As he squatted on his heels he held the coat across his knees and seemed engaged in a close scrutiny of it. He turned it about and held it up to stare at the pockets and the skirts. He fingered the lace at the cuffs. At last with a sigh he arose and replaced the coat where he had found it and with a stealth never to be expected of so bulky a man he stole up the ladder and back to bed.

I could not understand the scene at all, and finally turned my face to the wall and slept. Before dropping off, I remembered the way was open for me to leave, did I so desire; but the chance tempted me none. After all they were my kinsmen, and if they desired to sacrifice me on some of their altars the girl would be in the game and it would be largely their own affair.

I was awakened by the aroma of frying meat, and hastily slipping from my couch, got into my clothes. Simon was serving as cook. He gave me a surly glance as I greeted him. I hurried outdoors to a bench holding a bucket of water, and with a flint-like piece of yellow soap lathered my face and hands, rinsed off as best I could and began groping toward the peg holding the rough toweling. A small hand touched mine and I was holding the toweling.

Hastily clearing my eyes, I looked about, only to find I was alone. Yet I knew none of the Macson men had the inclination, or the small hand, to do me any such courtesy, and my heart was wonderfully free from worry when old Angus called me to breakfast.

The three sons and their father were waiting for me, not so much from a point of politeness as to avoid an interruption to the long grace. I seated myself and then the girl came in, as fresh and sweet as jessamine, and took her place beside me and folded her hands and bowed her shapely head. Her father gave her a look of rebuke and began his grace, his voice booming and rumbling through the thick beard.

Simon was silent and morose through the meal, but could not restrain his gaze from wandering to my coat. Tom and Dick exchanged confidences and snickered, and were frowned upon by their sister. Old Angus seldom raised his eyes but ate on as one who has a certain stint to do and must be done with it. At last he testily chided the younger sons—

"What are you two so silly about?"

"We were thinking as how Simon has a soft heart for a fine coat, sir," said Tom.

"And he has hard hands for soft heads," growled Simon.

"Talk, talk," wearily cried Angus. Then to me, "Have you finished?"

I nodded and pushed my three-legged stool back from the rough table.

"You will take this belt and ride where my daughter leads you," said Angus, passing the money-belt across the table.

She had addressed not a word to me during the meal, but now I had hopes we were to have speech together. The pleasure of having her for a guide was tinged, however, with disappointment that he should refuse the money.

"You're sending it back to Uncle David?" I asked.

He wagged his white head cunningly, and retorted: "Nay, nay. I'd not be sending it back to David. I'd not let it go that far even if the —— himself sent it. It shall do its work for these United States, but not through me."

These United States! As if they were firmly established as thirteen facts! And how they all harped on the title! I rose and strapped on the belt, and announced:

"Then I am ready for this blind errand. Did you come to Charleston, though I was a red-hot Tory—which I am not—I would not receive you with so much suspicion."

"Aye? Perhaps the Charleston and Lynch Creek Macsons haven't visited each other enough to get acquainted," he dryly replied.

"When we come to Charleston we'll make it tingling hot for the turncoats who've laughed at us," warned Simon.

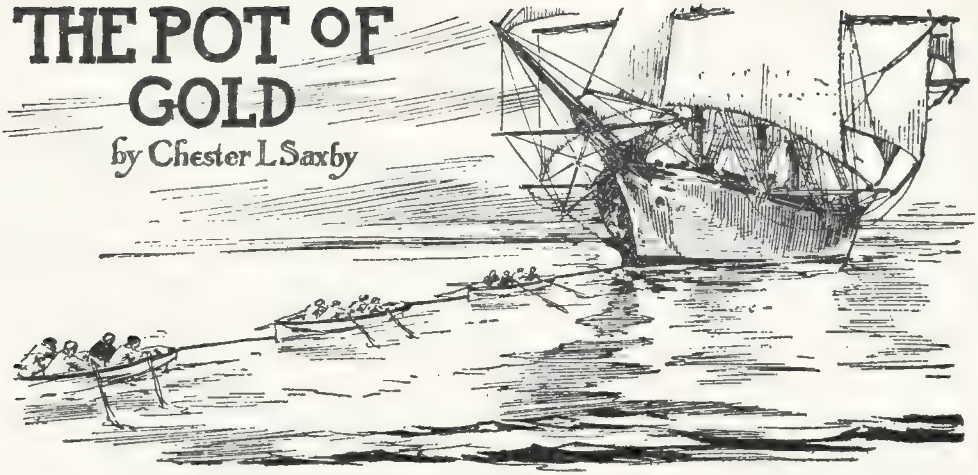
"La! Another fight!" sighed the girl. "Come, Cousin James, let's be going. It's not a long ride if we meet no Tories."

That such an encounter was possible was evident from the grave faces of her brothers, and yet not a man offered to escort us or go in her stead. She retired to her end of the cabin and when she returned she had her long leather leggings on and was carrying a rifle. With a nod and a mumbled word my visit to Angus Macson and his family ended, and I was riding down the creek with the girl a rod in advance.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE POT OF GOLD

by Chester L Saxby



Author of "The Turn of the Tide," "The Dream's End," etc.

THE day the *Samson* catted her anchor and shook out her great wings and swept out of San Carlos roadstead northward carrying half a cargo of coffee, was the first day of a new life to her captain.

He had just buried a hope that had bloomed unwisely; Lelona, the glorious Spanish woman who had his promise, was married.

Love—his one adventure into the affections of a woman—did not mark the way to happiness; and he was glad, was Captain Arnie Sondheim, gladder than he would confess even in his own heart.

He placed a stern face and an honestly puzzled one upon his difficulty; but in reality it was no difficulty at all. He lost nothing but outraged pride, and this he had lost many times before at the hands of hard captains and bucko mates.

He was glad. Weeks and weeks of sailing southward and schooling himself to believe that Lelona held in her cool hands the life he yearned for—and then in five minutes it was all overthrown, and he was dazed but satisfied.

A sailor's true love is the sea; more properly in this case a ship that sailed the sea, a ship of ships, the proud, square-rigged three-master *Samson.* And next after this love came the friendship of men, the friendship of the little world enclosed by a vessel's bulwarks—aye, and the respect of those of a bigger world, whether they liked him or not. Wherefore it may be observed that pride had *not* been lost after all with Lelona's defection. Besides, a bruised pride may shake its possessor awake.

Arnie awoke quickly under the stimulus of the crew's jolly behavior and the bark's loyal response. The men appeared to have an idea of their own of what had happened; they were tickled to have their skipper escape from the wiles of womanhood.

The bark, being bound to Arnie by an affection the others could not know, troubled not with the cause of what had given her back her master, asked no explanations, desired no excuses, nodded her pleasure to every onrushing sea, whispered her faith in the draft from the spanker and with the freshening blow whistled a merry tune.

A day to usher in joy and sound creeds, this! A capful of wind with an odor of sweet rain about it sent the seas dancing and scurrying; a sky full of white tufts played a game with the sun; the air circulated lightly, buoyantly, and held the barometer steady. Courses, topsails, topgallantsails bellied smoothly. The bark made ten knots, heeled ever so slightly at the angle the jack-tar approves.

Arnie walked the alley reflecting. He was facing a turn of affairs, and he wondered if he was sensible to feel glad. He had gone through a number of vague hopes and beliefs, and each time found himself where he started. If he could be an honest fatalist, he knew it would be better; for some—and he acknowledged himself one of these—the most worth-while striving is foredoomed to failure.

Judging thus by the past, he had no right to feel glad now. And what was he feeling glad about but the very things that had galled and oppressed him for so many years—the vastness of the sea; the unrelieved, monotonous companionship of crude men; the motion of the ship.

Up forward of the capstan a voice broke into song. A group of the watch sat on the barrels of the windlass and rocked and roared with laughter. At the bitts two men shot dice and argued politics. From the galley came a rat-a-tat-tat as the cook beat up his batter. Aloft in the crow's-nest the lookout drummed and whistled.

Two years ago all this seemed more than he could stand; he had cursed himself up and down for harkening to the call of the offshore wind. Now the very same situation and the sounds and the sights and the smells drew out the sting of a brutal hurt and stole away his reflectiveness so that he flung his distrust after it and grinned.

Obviously nothing had changed but himself; then it was nothing but a state of mind that went for happiness—a state of mind *and* the *Samson*.

Always before there was that lack of ambition striving against him. No more would there be that; he knew the sense of power and accomplishment as mate and captain; there rested in achievement a sort of glory, just as there rested in the friendship and regard of men a deep content. On this day he faced the world with a determination to succeed. He had mastered loneliness; now he must master failure.

He set himself a hard task—for a person who all his life dealt simply in ideals and dreams. But he practised meeting the world's measure and, with Lelona no longer an equation, his unusual mind was a willing leader in adaptation inasmuch as the study was a positive joy, and the world's measure was figures.

He took up the burden of figuring profits in carrying; took it up where he had left off with it, and managed to make slack shipping-times squeeze out a margin for the owners.

Thus for the delivery of his half-cargo of timber at Panama he obtained a load of farm machinery for Valdivia, whence after a wait of a week he brought sacked wheat to Guayaquil. There he lay until idleness drove him back to Callao in ballast, and a skimpy wharf-showing required him to carry coal to the nitrate ports. Iquique, dull of trade and neglected, offered a cruise to Buenos Aires.

Arnie grew desperate and took the bark around the Horn. And fairly in the center of the South American trade he found himself becalmed as to shipping. Offerings were meager and led up the coast farther and farther from his field of operations. Hard-fisted, narrow-souled old skippers, last of the category to be squeezed from the sea, shook their heads and drew down their eyebrows and drew up their chins.

"It don't pay to keep American registry," they said. "Trade all going to nothing, and the Dutch and the Souwegians sneaking under our prices— What's the world coming to? When there ain't trade, there ain't anything."

For Arnie this suggestion had some worth. He bargained for a cargo of coffee bound to San Francisco—and got it by the simple expediency of throwing out his own wages. Rather than lose command of the bark through inability to make her pay, he would work for nothing. His love for the vessel—that was first; then the faith of the men; then the respect of the world in general. His creed; his symphony!

The short passage through the Canal gave him a bare chance. But he lay at anchor four days because of a landslide, whereby he knew his enterprise a failure. The heat became intense, such a still and weighted heat as one gets inshore. Under its influence the crew became irritable and pettish toward one another. Arnie, to whom all weather was one, did his best to lift them out of the slump by joking and laughing. But they would not have it. Indeed, they were far from being themselves.

HE WAS roused one night and stumbled down into the forecastle full upon a battle royal. Blood flowed from noses and streamed across knuckles. Animal breath vied with animal sweat; execration filled the place to choking.

"You're all right, and you're all wrong," he said, elbowing them apart.

"You'll never do him no good a-stoppin' me from hittin' 'im!" . . . "This 'ere ain't no common scrap, sir. I'll kill that dirty——"

Said Arnie, "Any killing aboard here is going to mean murder."

"Don't go lookin' at me now. Don't do ut, sir," one of them fairly screamed. "Keep out o' my way, I'm askin'. This 'ere's Fisher 'n' me. Keep out!"

"Up on deck, every man," sharply spoke Arnie. "You're going loco down here in the heat. Up with you! Run the decks! Get exercise! Go ashore!"

He saw the way matters were drifting. He put out a hand and enforced his order by a shove and a grin. In the next breath a hand leaped out and smote his jaw. He continued to grin, but he reached sidewise and hoisted his assailant up the steps by the seat of the trousers. He did not stop for a blow under his arm, although he stepped down when his man was deposited above; and half the crew waited for him.

"Come on, you rough-necks and soreheads," went his salutation.

They came. All in a rush and a clamor they came. He saw by their eyes that they scarcely knew what they were about. They trod on one another's feet and kicked and elbowed mercilessly. Driven to the limit by heat and idleness, they had become animals; the madness of depression was responsible. Not one but loved Arnie as a brother; only as a brother did they fight him now; and the anger of brothers is terrible.

Before fifteen minutes had passed sore heads were broken heads and faces unrecognizable by bruises and blood-letting. Only three retained their feet, and Arnie was one of these. When he dropped his hands, still grinning, he stood nearly naked, peering out of one eye. On deck not one stopped him.

He sent the mate forward with the contents of the medicine-chest. The word to proceed was being bawled to the second mate. While the tow-line slack came in and, like his head, the rope seemed ready to burst out, he stumbled to the wheel. What man could he trust besides himself? And the *Samson* running a narrow lane of water! Never should the bark lack for fit ministration for all that. The friendship of the men he shipped, or their undying enmity—here was no choice. The bark was first!

Out of the Gulf of Panama there were wind-puffs and an end of the humidity; nevertheless, the men did their work in pensive silence and got forward again, and when Arnie spoke to them for the most part they answered sullenly and avoided the scrutiny of his eyes. Arnie viewed this sign of shame unhappily, mystified that men's temper could hold them so at outs. These had been his friends, those whose admiration and respect he joyed in, whose zeal he counted on. He had lost them.

Then they must sail the vessel anyway. Inconstant as their loyalty and friendship might be, the *Samson* would have their arms and their backs. There was only one thing bigger in life and more worthy than this crew of his consideration, and that was the bark herself.

Hurt, robbed of his faith, he resigned himself, only to forget this resignation and clap a fellow heartily on the back and get for his pains a deep flush, a contraction of the muscles and an incoherent mumble. He admitted then that he had failed, failed as he had failed before—but worse. He would sail in at the Golden Gate with a crew that said nothing and watched him suspiciously. And his report to the owners would certainly show a loss and his incompetence.

There remained the one chance otherwise—a fresh blow off the quarter. He considered this chance next to an impossibility, and therefore when the light, shifty wind lay down the next morning to a half-gale, he stood at the weather rail and stared out with his mouth open and the breath of his body forced back and his face turning purple. Then he laughed and rushed below to refigure his cruise.

In two days the blow changed. Without warning, it shifted around to the northeast. One minute the vessel's head fell off; the next, the foretopgallantmast snapped off and came tumbling down.

Arnie had just computed a day's margin when the unforeseen occurred. Hard upon his glimmer of hope fell the shower of wreckage from aloft; it fell like a damp cloak upon his newly flaming expectations. In an hour he was not thinking of this at all; he was thinking of saving the bark. The forestay had torn out. Headless, the ship swung round.

"Call the watch!" he shouted to the second mate. "Lay aft here! Weather fore and main clew garnets and buntlines—aft and take in the spanker!"

Down came the wind from the new quarter, and away sped the vessel westward. Not for four hours did the crew get a double reef in the topsails. After that came a slashing and chopping and flailing and rending as the tangled gear of the foretopgallant was freed and the vessel cleared of the upper mast.

The night had descended by the time the amputated foretopmast could be rigged with a gaff. Through the darkness the bark went yawing, her voice hoarse in protest.

The air thickened and swirled inboard from every direction, sending the vessel smashing her head left and right. To steady the helm the jib was set, but no sooner was it set than it blew out. Then with two extra spars and all the remaining canvas the carpenter fashioned a drag.

The crew complained to the mate of the jerking this produced; but they did not complain long; the drag-line parted early in the morning, and the emergency suits of canvas were irretrievably lost. Hours of dangerous toil by both watches resulted in preventer-guys being rigged to the bowsprit for the carrying of some sort of head-sail to keep the vessel before the wind and ahead of the tall seas.

Throughout that day and the next night the *Samson* held her stern to the wind and raced southwest.

Throughout that day and the next night Arnie stood with slight interruptions at the wheel. He steered by the humming in the rigging; in the night-time he could see nothing of the sea, and in the day-time he had no wish to look into the binnacle. At a close enough guess the vessel's present course, he estimated, represented a loss of a day every ten hours. It was on this account that late on the second day Arnie determined to round to and ride out the gale with the least possible drifting.

Against this intention the mates stalwartly objected.

"Let 'er run, sir. W'at fit head-sail's she got? She won't never luff, ner she won't never stay on. W'at's a few days, sir? Risk enough holdin' on."

"I aim to be captain on this bark," Arnie answered them.

In his preoccupation and anxiety he little realized how this might sound—and how it did sound. He meant he purposed to give the owners no reasonable basis for dismissing him; to the mates it was simply an outburst against their presumption to suggest ways and means. Succeeding the difficulty with the crew, as it did, it increased the unpleasantly stiff attitude toward Arnie; left him, indeed, severely alone.

But first, in bringing the vessel into the wind, Arnie must suffer one more reverse; for when the crew threw the coils of running-gear to the deck, and buntlines and leachlines were cast off the pins, the maintopgallant sheet was laid hold of by a half-drowned seaman instead of a buntline and cast off. In an instant the maintopgallant-sail burst asunder with a tremendous roar and streamed to tatters. About the bark must needs go again, unable to claw into the wind in such condition.

In the waist Arnie watched his orders carried out and saw the error by which not time alone but a breast of canvas became lost. And there was no more.

But he only stared stolidly aloft, letting the encrusted seas fling bitter brackish water into his mouth and up his nostrils. Not by a word or a movement did he remonstrate with the careless mast-hand. He merely dropped his face to survey the deck at his feet. And by and by he turned silently and went below.

There he tried first of all to sleep. But notwithstanding that he had not closed his eyes in an interval of thirty-six hours, his mind continued clear and awake. It was not given that he should sleep and so forget misfortune that always and ever pursued him by land and by sea. Therefore he set himself to bring the log up to date and to calculate the drift by dead reckoning and to reduce this to money and so compute the loss that every hour piled higher.

* * *

LOSS—loss—loss—! Why did he try, he wondered? Surely it had been proved to him over and over again that any earnest endeavor of his called up forces too great for him to overcome. He had wanted to be captain; and first Nature conspired against him, and then no owner would have him. When he made the coast pass him, a swindler cheated him and left a lugger on his hands.

Now by some momentary whim of Fortune a ship of ships was under his sole command, and the glory of her being, her lines, her towering masts, her enormous spread of wing, the confidence of her helm in him—these all were as elements in a swiftly fading dream, for a skipper of a trader is signed not only to navigate but to make the vessel yield a substantial return, or the navigation is hollow vanity.

Still, there rose in his tormented mind no question of what he should do. Arnie had stepped from failure to failure with no hesitation or drawing back. He might wonder what it was all about and why he continued to try and what he tried to attain; but the going on—on—on was a matter one had to accomplish, since the other route marked something far worse than failing. He had a little agreement with himself; quit he would not.

It really didn't matter; there was nothing gained in the other direction— And there he halted his pessimism. True, the world apparently had no intention of granting him the common respect of man for fellow man, and that fine achievement—friendship—his men had refused him. But the love of the ship was his; down below here he could hear the thrumming sheets:

"Ar-r-r-r-rnie!—. Up-a-dup! Up-a-dup! Ar-r-r-r-rnie——"

Arnie lifted his head from the log-book upon which it had fallen. The voice of the *Samson* calling to him! He smiled, flung shut the log and answered it. His place from now on was on deck. His privilege it was to have fallen in love with a vessel that loved him and trusted him. Wounded and limping, she called to him now.

As he swung forward in search of the mate on duty to hear a report of the mate and to have the well sounded for a possible leak, one Berkoll of the mate's watch turned unexpectedly to avoid a handful of spume and butted into him. They regarded each other for a moment blankly. Berkoll had been chief among the crew in squandering fair round silver to purchase a watch for Arnie's pocket; previous to that Arnie had kept Berkoll from death when he lay bloated with the dread scurvy. Now Arnie grinned uncertainly, while Berkoll gave no sign at all.

"We'll come through—as usual, Berkoll," Arnie said. "Tell the men."

"Beggin' yer pardon, sir—they figger tuh stay out o' yer way an' not bother yuh none." He would have passed unobtrusively to leeward, but Arnie called:

"What's it for, Berkoll? What have I done? Out with it now!"

Berkoll's voice trembled as he howled back above the storm:

"It wouldn't be nothin', sir, as we'd care tuh discuss with yuh—not in the bark's presence."

"Come along with it, Berkoll! You can talk, and you've got sense."

" 'Ave I?" Berkoll's eyes blazed. " 'Ere goes, so 'elp me! If us bein' due tuh home ain't nothin' along o' how the ship 'ud like it, ye might tell us, sir."

Arnie watched him roll easily off across the lurching deck. Having nothing ready, he had had to let Berkoll retire unanswered. But he thought he understood. Berkoll had opened a lane of thought, a suggestion quite natural. The crew resented nothing so much as the bark's pride, in spite of the fact that that pride had been their pride. But the vessel's pride had meant doubling back and around the Horn and laying to for a week at a time.

Arnie realized especially in this port-idling the greatest harm to a ship's company. But if the crew had cause for mild dissatisfaction in this, how much more cause had he? They gave but their time for which he must find a margin of payment; he gave time, payment, standing with the owners, hope of keeping his command, and now—by the fury of this storm—even his ship itself unless help came.

He swept the gray moil of waters when they rose to a crest, straining his vision for a sign of weather change and seeing only smoky scud and fury unappeasable, wild seas lashing higher and higher, breaking and foaming and building up again to blot out the sky. Help could not, would not come. Any vessel that still lived must tuck up her skirts and flee willy-nilly for her own life. Let him get out of this if he could, but not expect the impossible.

Taller and taller grew the pursuing combers. They caught the bark and shook her. They twisted her about and smote her until she cried out in all her timbers. Every hour the peak of the gale seemed reached; and every hour it added to itself. Day and night succeeded each other amid a furor never lessening; howls, shrieks, roars of madness, and one sustained note of anguish—an intonation of intolerable dread, the high, thin scream of a lost soul.

The dejected crew, oppressed by their plight, tried to shut out that scream by wadding their ears. Failing in this, they retreated to the forecastle and sang and cursed and hung pots and pans from lanyards so that they would clash and drown that terrible sound. All to no use; that thin note penetrated the whole ship.

In desperation one man after another dared exposure in the rigging and climbed and hunted, his knife between his teeth, for the source of the voice. Then they stared one at another—and at Arnie. And here and there full in the on-rush of the wind a man stood at the rail and surveyed the sea hypnotically.

The spell of the storm! Hopelessness, melancholy! There might have been fear, but the supreme tragedy was desolation. Appetites disappeared; gray as the atmosphere loomed every face; dull as the slate-colored sea and flecked with its green of madness grew every eye.

Arnie sprang into the shrouds and dragged down a seaman poised above the churning waters. In that act he cheated the elements and accepted their gage of battle. Something sprang to life in him that for some time had lain dormant; it was the spirit of the vikings who were his ancestors. He laughed as he shoved the man forward and told him to get below.

Anxious master he had been, but the old Arnie began now to show himself more and more. Boiling anger at the littleness of men's spirit caused that laugh; on the heels of disgust came the sterling belief in himself that had made him in the past the leader of his forecastle mates. He laughed in anger and possibly in bitterness of his failure; and then he laughed at the idea of the storm beating him down. The storm was nothing but impotent elements driven into convulsion; man's mind was superior to that.

He had failed as a skipper; he could not save the pride of the bark, or the friendship of the crew, or the respect of the world. But there did not exist a storm at sea that could destroy his faith in himself. He grinned and set himself to prove it.

And now the *Samson*, making westing at a terrific pace, drew into the path of shipping and passed vessels stripped to headsail and hove to, passed steamships belching smoke and wreathed in spume with the struggle into the wind.

The crew were for running up the ensign inverted when they saw this chance. To save their lives was their consuming thought. But Arnie held them at bay and laughed.

"Afraid, are you?" he shouted. "What are you afraid of? I'll bring you in. You're not going to give up this bark, not for a while yet if I have anything to do with it. Understand?"

STEAMSHIPS and wind-boats and at length a deserted vessel, a derelict, a dreadful sight with her masts gone and beam on to the seas. The crew gaped and licked their salt-stiffened lips.

But Arnie watched that gruesome thing with a kindling eye. Like a racing engine his mind worked. He bawled to the crew to stand by with ropes from capstan and windlass. He set the mate to back the little canvas showing and jumped to the wheel. Sensing his intention, those gray faces lost even the grayness. Arnie steered the *Samson* straight for the derelict.

At the last minute he roared to take her a-back and swung close upon those rearing bows. He grinned as he missed them by scant yards and five lines circled through the air. The canvas thundered; two lines slipped back into the water; one reached the bitts; one smacked just short of the derelict's old-fashioned anchor-winch and entangled itself in a heap of wreckage; one fell over the starboard anchor and gripped a fluke. Down went the helm; but not before tarred and toughened ship's rope smoked with its swift journey over the rail. Fluttering and shaking with uncertainty, the *Samson* fell off and lay a perilous moment in the trough.

"Check in the fore braces!" Arnie bellowed.

The weather braces were manned by a silent, quaking crew. The noise in the rigging was din chaotic. A sea hurled the bark over on to her scuppers, and men hung by nerveless hands and waited. Then very slowly she came up into the wind; the tautening ropes tore out the mizzen port shrouds.

"Take the helm!" rang Arnie's command.

Two men jumped to relieve him. His rush was toward the starboard boat.

"Lay back here and lower away!"

He had a rope around his waist in an instant and climbed into the boat.

"Tail on to these falls, you!" he shook up the staring men. "She can't drag on that line. I'm going to board 'er and put a stern-line on to 'er. Splice on a cable when I reach 'er!"

Had any of the company possessed actual comprehension, Arnie must certainly have been restrained from such an undertaking. Stupidly the men dropped the boat with its single passenger, and it just missed splintering against the stern. Crouched in the bottom, Arnie was tossed like a cork between heaven and earth. A curling, murderous comber flung the boat up and up, full upon the derelict's head. As it was shattered to kindling-wood, Arnie leaped for the cathead, bruised himself against the anchor—and hung on. From the *Samson* a cheer swept back to him.

Hand over hand he hauled in the heavy cable attached to the light line and signaled to release the rope that was dragging at the *Samson's* head. Straight in the wind's eye the bark lay then, with the derelict her sea-anchor and holding her true. The crew were whirling their caps in the air and dancing. The thrill of satisfaction he had known once or twice in his life warmed him, gave him vigor, gave him trust in life that no man under lesser circumstances can understand.

Without other assistance than his two hands he "walked" the cable, palm over palm, back to the bark. Seas swept him; the jar of the derelict's dead weight jerked ghoulishly to spill him; he saw tense, distorted countenances watching him. The mate stood ready with a boat-hook that trembled; but Berkoll thrust him aside and swung over the rail to pull in this daring skipper. And others were not far behind.

Sympathy aboard ship is little known; admiration is unlimited. In the trail of this latter feeling pride awoke on the *Samson*, never to be relinquished.

The crew consigned their dejection to the winds, and after three more days of drifting still joked and sang. Then the gale subsided, the seas quieted somewhat, and a prize crew went aboard the derelict schooner to rig a jury mast.

In the countenances of those men pulling stoutly in that open boat there bloomed an intense curiosity; likewise in those countenances staring from the *Samson's* rail. It was more than mere curiosity; it amounted to absorbing expectation. But not for the mysteries of the deep as marked in a log-book open at an unfinished sentence; not for the signs of a past dignity—never these.

She had been a proud carrier upon a time; wherefore they withheld their smiles. But she was not to be judged by dignity. Standards aboard the *Samson* were not of yesterday but of today. The era of the sailing vessel was not gone; rather, it had risen anew; the *Samson* led the van. As sailors these men sought the actual, and, delving into the hatches, they found it.

They stared; scowled; spat; kicked aside the ropes by which they had descended and thrust their hands into it, into the gravel and silt and what-not. A grim joke, indeed. She was in ballast—sand, dirt, muck. They had plucked an empty nest. Up on deck the word was bawled to Arnie; twelve or fifteen feet of dirt.

Arnie laughed. His mind was browsing in the swelter of a heat-pulsing day a dozen years back when, initiated into the spell of the weary monsoons, he had watched such a vessel as this pound up from New Caledonia. The word was passed then; nickel ore, an impressive cargo. In that memory he called for another boat to be lowered and himself boarded the schooner. They handed up a bucket of the stuff and he ran his hands through it.

"Nickel ore," he said.

There could be no doubt of it. And rich in metal.

Spirits ran high. Estimates were made; bets were whispered. A vessel worth probably seventy thousand dollars—a cargo bringing it to a round hundred thousand in value. Bring her in? Aye, they would sail her around the world.

"Keep your boat ready then," Arnie ordered them. "We'll watch you close. Set riding-lights and sound the well every hour. No fool will drown for money."

"Nickel ore!" they echoed, and cheered as the captain departed.

Arnie set a course for Hawaii and speculatively regarded the schooner limping along abeam of him. The old careless Arnie once more, he asked nothing of fortune because he expected nothing. Every new day that the schooner stayed above water he grinned at her. He said to the mate:

"You never knew me to have a wrong hunch, did you? Well, she'll last a week. Stand by to take those fellows off. Nobody'll say I didn't try."

But the schooner kept her scuppers free and her head on, and the end of the week came. Arnie laughed at that. He thought it a funny thing.

"Going to wait and founder in the bay," he mused.

BUT she dropped anchor in the roadstead of Honolulu a mile from shore and waited for Arnie to dispose of her. The crew went ashore with him and spread the tale of her capture.

They seemed unable to say enough of their captain.

But Arnie went straight to those who bought and sold. In his ears was the hum of devoted voices, was the singing of a proud ship. He would lose the rest, but these things he would hold at any cost. It surprized him to find that a death-dealing storm had driven him post-haste to market. Three hundred miles a day of westing! A cent of profit on every pound of coffee! Grimly contemplating this rare joke, he proceeded to discharge and drum up a cargo for San Francisco.

He returned to the wharf to see if the schooner had foundered. He saw her bobbing easily in the offing, and the sight struck him so ludicrously that he laughed aloud, then ventured to find an agent with whom to negotiate for the delivery and salvage. After that he stumbled upon a consignment of sugar on which he bargained for a quick delivery in San Francisco. This was too much; it puzzled him.

"Well, maybe," he told himself, "the crew'll eat the sugar up."

Repairing the *Samson's* rigging bade fair to be an expensive job; apart from the loss of the topgallantmast with its yards and canvas and the blowing out of the staysail and the jib, the maintopgallant was in ribbons, and hardly a length of rope aboard was sound. But the crew took an uncommon step—aft; weary of the sea as they were and eager for a go on dry land, they offered themselves as a gang of riggers and went to work with a will.

Berkoll spoke for the others and said:

"We figger it's no more'n right tuh turn to, seein' how yuh brought us in an' all. We never meant nothin' afore."

Arnie stood with hands thrust deep into trousers pockets and surveyed them with proper reserve. In his new—or rather, renewed—attitude of the man who lives while he lives and anticipates no favors of life, he unwittingly assumed an air that binds a crew whole-heartedly to the support and trust of an officer; this was an air of thorough responsibility for every detail, especially toward the welfare of his men; but it had an impersonal tincture that drew a chalk-line before familiarity.

The men took this change to indicate his question of their honesty, and accepted without a murmur—even with better satisfaction—a reproving indifference more nearly in the line with the position of captain. On Arnie's part no indifference of them was thought of; simply he set himself to accept the verdict of life callously, regarding that verdict in advance as certain defeat of his three-fold creed.

After repeated loss he recognized life as a master painter of unreal pictures, a creator of rainbows, gorgeous rainbows that faded. It loaned at excessive cost the elements of contentment, and withdrew them without warning; Lelona was the last of these.

Now once more it offered him the pot of gold and spread that path of promise to where it lay awaiting him; pride of possession, friendship and the mantle of respect. He would fight for it because that, too, was life. He would go down fighting; but he would not again yield pride of trust or that other dear payment—hope.

⁂

SO HE surveyed the men—the men whose comradeship reached him so closely—with a curt smile and nod and told them casually:

"Plenty of room for that spirit, boys. Let's see you tackle it."

In five days the *Samson*, sagging on her cable with head-sails down, stood loaded deep with sugar and ready to be off. The men, squinting up at their handiwork, were ready, likewise. This cruise would take them home; they could not be done talking of it.

"Home," they said, dwelling on the word.

Yet fully half of them knew no other home than ill-kept boarding-houses superintended by professional runners. Eagerly their gaze followed Arnie coming out to them with clearance-papers signed. Down went the falls to be hooked on; up came the boat. Mast-hands already occupied the yard-arms. Arnie gave the word to the mates; the bark became an ant-hill of activity; the feverish workers aloft sang out—

"Sheet home when you're ready!"

And the *Samson* was homeward bound.

All in a fair breeze the island of Oahu sank off the quarter. All in a jaunty exuberance the combined watches ran the rigging, pulled in time with a crude chantey at braces and halliards, heaved upon the windlass and walked the capstan. All in fine fettle the bark flew over the opalescent ocean, glistening in her trucks, tingling in her stays. All armored in careless adaptation of the spirit of the hour, envizored by a broad grin for the scheming world to see, strode Arnie Sondheim under the broad shadows of the bark's white wings.

In the dim, erased past his forefathers had been vikings and had ruled hardy, unfearing, fierce-eyed crews and stubborn-thewed ships. The cycle of the years turned back today; as those other Sondheims had ruled, so he, too, ruled— *Captain* Sondheim, by the grace of fortune! A little maritime world all his own! It was something to awaken pride, this power.

But he thought of quite another matter as he strode his royal promenade. He thought of the years he had given to the sea with no reward at all, of the service he had rendered in boyish zeal and mature doubt of his calling. He rocked himself with the motion of the vessel into the strangeness of those seventeen years; into the mystery of the deep that his boyish heart had hungered for; into the hurt of ship's discipline and the weary toil, toil, toil, that killed the romance; into the consuming anger he had come to know for this vast, heaving purgatory; into the wonder of fool dreams that a woman had conjured up, whereby the joy of responsibility first clothed him.

Little by little, how that mystery of the deep had passed! How utterly he had come to hate the sea that cursed as it smiled, luring him with vague suggestions of happiness and granting him a curse and a blow of a rope's bight.

Always knowing rainbows! But he knew now that the sea did not share in the blame for that; he was glad he had found this out. Life painted the rainbows—and smudged them out. Life whispered to his boy's heart and weighed down his man's hopes. Life alone was the master. The sea held in its shimmering hands all that a person might well take, and its hands had never dropped with fatigue or chicanery. Only there were some men from whom life kept the sea's plenteousness. And he was one.

The *Samson* soared like an albatross. But he did not believe. He did not trust life. He trusted only himself, and he knew that life was the one thing bigger than himself.

He would bring the *Samson* in at the Golden Gate at a financial loss; there Captain Loman, whose illness had granted him this opportunity, waited to receive his charge again. A mate's berth he might be offered; but no one who had felt the exhilaration of being master of the *Samson* would ever be less. Nor would one care ever to command another lesser vessel.

This was the last cruise. He had sailed on doomed ships; this ship sailed with a doomed captain.

The *Samson* tore through the water like a spirit possessed. She seemed intent upon bringing him in despite his certainty otherwise. She shouted gaily:

"G-g-g-g-*rin!* G-g-grin; but we'll make it eaz-z-z-z-zy!"

In four days he calculated the make of an average week and laughed foolishly when he tried to frown. In seven days Honolulu lay eighteen hundred miles astern and San Francisco scarcely eight hundred dead ahead. His pencil trembled over his figuring; he went over the chart a second and a third time, tallied his solar observations with dead reckoning, refused still to believe the truth and threw his computations away.

On the ninth day the *Samson* roared its open challenge in his name as she flung away the spume. Close-hauled on the starboard tack, she shouldered into the wind with a glory that her builders could not have dreamed. Her fervor got into his blood.

He himself took command to put her on the port tack. His hair streaming, his eyes a-kindle, he turned back the cycle of the years again. The crew leaped and ran, swarmed aloft at his bidding. They furled all but topsails and spanker and foretopmast staysail; the yards they braced to starboard on the run. The helmsman repeated the order in a musical chant and put the wheel hard down. In the consequent furor aloft while headway was stopped, the *Samson* clattered and chattered hysterically:

"Get me over quick! Quick! Got to go-o-o-o-o——"

Then she was away again, biting at the edge of the lusty trades, singing and zinging and winging.

That night the wind slackened, and Arnie changed the course for a northerly one to meet the westerlies. In the morning the northeast trades had altogether subsided, and the bark lay becalmed on a gentle swell.

Arnie waited in fear of a storm out of the east. Hourly he consulted the barometer; but the barometer held steady throughout and the calm remained unbroken.

The first day passed in good spirits; for well the sailor knows he can not pick up a wind in a minute. The second day passed with some discussion, in which Arnie did not join. He leaned against the rail and looked down at the water rather than off at the horizon or overhead at the sails. And the third day he was still beside the rail, a stoical indifference masking his feelings.

The forecastle jerked a thumb in his direction and argued and spat and stuck their knives into the mast and whistled. Arnie heard them whistling and managed to grin.

THE FOURTH day brought Berkoll and two others aft. Berkoll ventured:

"We be askin' tuh do what's possible tuh be done, sir. Say the word so's we kin be at it. Time is a deal tuh you, ain't it, now?"

"I don't know," said Arnie. "I'm—not so unhappy—now. Nice day."

"Cap'n, we ain't squealin'," Berkoll replied. "Yuh hed us dead tuh rights bufore, an' we owns up to ut. But ef yuh cu'd trust us tuh take the boats——"

"The boats?" Arnie echoed. "Want to fish? All right, boys." And he resumed his staring down at the water. "Get some bait out of the galley," he added.

"The' ain't no bait needed fer we 'uns, sir. We'd take any line fer you from here tuh ——. Thet other time was the weather—an' so is this 'ere."

With that they made off forward, and a few minutes later the entire crew, stripped to the waist, lowered three boats and, rowing them around to the bows, took a towline to each boat and fell to the task of pulling the bark into the wind.

Arnie was scanning the water when it began to move very slightly astern. Not a ripple showed—the movement was not so great—but bits of refuse gained some sort of momentum. Arnie flung about, his face radiant, and gazed upward at the sails.

He gazed and gazed, puckered his forehead and shot a glance toward the horizon, studied the sea in all directions and returned to the sails. Those immense expanses hung listless, motionless, wrinkled as the face of patiently waiting old age. He stood gathering his wits.

Then a sound broke through his preoccupation, and he ran forward past the chuckling mate. From the bow he looked down upon three boat-loads of seamen bending their naked backs, churning the water, beginning already to run with moisture as they pulled—pulled—pulled—

An expression akin to awe settled in Arnie's face. At the same time they perceived him, whereupon between bursting energy and self-consciousness they became gargoyles grinning back at him. And the *Samson*, majestic in misfortune, forged ever so slowly forward.

There was solemnity in the scene, had there been eyes to witness that aspect of it. But the men knew nothing of solemnity and realized not at all the fineness of their defiance of supreme natural forces. They had no thought to hurl a challenge at the withholding wind. They were crude men going about a voluntary task of bringing in the ship; that the task was herculean beyond their conception did not enter into consideration; had they been less crude, their undertaking must have appalled them.

And the solemnity was not more possible in Arnie's state of mind. Solemnity is impersonal. The color rose in Arnie's neck and ears and cheeks as he watched. These men attempted the impossible. Why?

His mouth was dry when he tried to speak. He turned to the mate.

"They ain't doin' bad," said the mate. "Ain't nothin' wrong 'ith them."

Arnie's mind went back to those idle days at the Canal, days much like this, with a hot sun on the water. They had fought one another then, fought until the blood ran freely. When he had flung in among them they had fought him, too. And this was their way of showing him that that other day had meant nothing.

He cried out—

"Avast, boys! What are you doing there?"

And a waggish fellow grunted between strokes that seemed on the point of tearing out his lungs:

"Got—a bite, cap'n. Gon' 'a pull 'im in—big—lazy devil!"

"Aims tuh git home," sang out another. "Gotta meet—a lydy in Frisco!"

"Gotta meet a lydy! Gotta meet a lydy!" the others took up the strain.

One who occupied the stern-sheets stood up with a bucket in his hands and sluiced each rower in turn. While Arnie watched they redoubled their efforts. One man wabbled in his seat; his oar splashed weakly. *Swish* went the contents of the bucket over him. He struggled erect again, dug in his oar and mumbled—

"Gotta meet a lydy—in Frisco!"

The second mate was rowing with them. He paused long enough to point to the bark's cutwater and roar:

"Look a' there now! Look a' there! She's throwin' it back! She's comin' along!"

At this a panted cheer went up in savage earnest.

Repeatedly Arnie called to them. The mate retorted, saluting.

"Beggin' pardon, sir—I kinda' figgered this 'ere was my watch."

And the men rowed on.

In shifts they held grimly to this strange endeavor all through the afternoon, and at four bells of the dog-watch one boat at a time came in for food. When darkness descended one boat kept a taut line while the rest of the crew slept in complete exhaustion upon the bare boards of the deck. Every two hours a boat crew was roused. The thump of rowlocks never ceased in all the long night.

The morning dawned pitilessly bright and barren of clouds. Men joked no more, scarcely spoke, and were doused often. Arnie paced the deck, to return frequently to the bows and watch them.

At noon one fellow was hoisted bodily over the rail and carried into the forecastle. When that boat crew put off again the mate, shaking off his clothes, climbed down the chains and took the empty thwart.

Midway of the afternoon a tired voice croaked without warning—

"Gotta meet a lydy!"

Oars swirled in the water.

"*Gotta* meet a lydy!" groaned the others.

But it was in the darkness and the stillness of the second night that the first note of singing rose over the water. Arnie listened as to an angelus.

" 'I shipped aft from the mast as fer as I dast
  Fer a bold whaler's life is a risk-o;'
Says Jonah, 'Sing hey!' 'Tis my lucky day,
  An' I'll lay me a course tuh Frisco——' "

When the chorus had died away Arnie shook himself out of a reverie that held him sternly watching the stars above the foremast, and called the cook to help him launch the gig. Then with a fourth line made fast he took his place beside the boats that had not yet surrendered the day's pull.

Eight days marked the reign of the calm, and in those eight days the bond between master and men was sealed. What the scurvy had begun the calm completed, fashioning a threefold friendship of skipper and men and ship that the sea seldom knows. Then a light, variable breeze was reached, and the *Samson* crept insistently westward. Long before the Golden Gate was raised, the cargo of sugar in the bark's hold had become a dead loss, and the margin of profit on the coffee was eaten up. But Arnie laughed as he had laughed when a captain's worries were unknown. He knew that although the barks would go to the command of some one else and the crew with her, the gift of her love and their friendship was his past all question. He had known that which in nearly a decade of following the sea he had yearned for—contentment.

SHE RODE at anchor in San Francisco Bay and watched the approach of the owners' launch. Tibbert himself came over the side, that singular twist very noticeable at the corner of his mouth.

"Well, Sondheim," he nodded, "you've been a long time at it."

"Aye," returned Arnie. "If you'll step into the cabin——"

"You went to get married," said Tibbert briskly. "Where's the woman?"

Almost without conscious thought Arnie raised a hand and waved it over the vessel. Tibbert looked all about, coming back to Arnie, whom he scrutinized.

"She didn't want you—was that it?" he queried.

"What? Don't want me? Oh, the woman! Aye, the woman turned me down."

"And the accounts—they're bad-looking, I suppose."

"If you'll come into the cabin——"

"A loss," nodded Tibbert, scowling deeply. "I expected that would be it."

The crew stood in a knot around the mast, muttering together, fidgeting as they cocked their ears and waited. Berkoll and four or five others were pushed forward suddenly and halted a few feet in front of Tibbert.

"Beggin' yer pardon, sir," Berkoll said to Arnie, not to Tibbert, "we'd request a word er two." They met Tibbert's scowl with scowls of their own. "We're a mind tuh take a hand fer our own good, sir," Berkoll drawled. "Which we don't know is how the cap'n mightn't be suitin' yuh. A loss, yuh says, sir, an' ef thet means the cap'n goes, we'd ruther stan' a bit of a loss in our pockets an' be done 'ith ut. Four months roun' o' wages is what we wants yuh sh'ud take, an' ye'll hev sixteen hun'erd dollars, an' thet 'er's consid'able fer any man."

"Captain Sondheim," remarked Tibbert, "is this your way aboard ship?"

Arnie took a step forward. His mouth was working.

"That'll do," he said huskily. "Go for-'ard, the lot of you!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" they chorused in a kindly growl, and marched off.

"A —— lot of bookkeepers for one craft! What's it to them now, Sondheim?" Tibbert scanned Arnie thoughtfully.

"It's none of their business, but it's not necessary to tell 'em."

"And how much is this loss? A long time out! Hope you haven't crippled us."

Tibbert turned and called down to the launch.

"Be easy with me," he added.

"The loss is thirteen hundred and fifty-five dollars," said Arnie.

A sigh escaped Tibbert.

"Ah, that's better!" came from him. "Now, that's something like— Bless your soul, that's fine, that's fine! I expected four thousand at least. The best I've heard, Sondheim!"

A head appeared over the rail, and another, and another.

"Here's your man, Gillen. Only thirteen hundred and fifty-five; think of that! Sondheim, this is Mr. Gillen. Wants to thank you for saving his schooner off the Marquesas. Don't say too much. *This* man's a reporter."

"I'm more obliged to you than I can say, captain," ejaculated Gillen, a thin-faced, nervously worried man. "Your report was cabled from Honolulu. You'll shake hands with me? Wonderful deed! The whole coast is talking about it."

"Easy now, Gillen," broke in Tibbert. "Don't put him up where I can't bid for him! Now *this* young fellow wants a story of the incident, Sondheim."

"There's no story," Arnie told him. "We had to save our lives, so we hooked on to the schooner as we drifted by; then the men over there brought 'er in."

The reporter's face fell. Gillen alone smiled and grasped Arnie's arm.

"Captain, I want to do anything and everything I can. I hope you'll not be hard on me, however. Fact of the matter is I had no insurance; not a dollar. I thought perhaps—if you understood—well, I've brought along a check for five thousand and I could in time scrape up half again as much. It's little, I know——"

"I'd like something for the men. I don't care about anything for myself. Money—I don't care much about." Arnie astonished him. He spoke sincerely; there was no chance of disbelieving him. "If you didn't have insurance, I guess the men won't want anything, either. But you can ask 'em."

"By golly!" came from the reporter. "Here's a story I've never heard of. Refuses money! Wow! That'll go strong. Queer fellah," he said in Tibbert's ear. "But I like him first class."

"So do I," returned Tibbert. "But the ——'s got such brains he probably won't stay with me. He'll want to go into steam now. Used to be an awful drinker. I cured him. Best man on the coast today. *I'll* give you a story, if he won't." He said to Arnie: "I suppose you wouldn't consider staying by this old hooker any longer. How about it?"

"Hooker?" articulated Arnie. "Hooker?" From the region of the mast a mutter of resentment arose. "Did you ever sail in her?"

"No," said Tibbert.

"Oh," said Arnie.

And like the regal lady that she was, the bark primly, proudly dipped her bows to him.

TWO TALES ABOUT BUFFALO BILL

by E. A. Brininstool

I.—BUFFALO BILL'S FIRST INDIAN

NOT many boys of eleven or twelve years of age who were brought up on the great plains in the Indian days could lay claim to having brought down an Indian through their skill with the rifle. Yet young Bill Cody, who later became the great showman, "Buffalo Bill," won that distinction when under the tender age of twelve years.

In 1857 young Cody's father died as the result of an old wound, leaving the Cody family in rather destitute circumstances, and it became necessary for young Billy Cody to "get out and rustle." He had no trouble securing employment with the great freighting-firm of Majors, Russell & Waddell, who were under contract to carry supplies to Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army at or near Salt Lake, where they were fighting the Mormons.

Young Bill Cody went along as a herder; the cattle being in charge of two brothers named McCarthy. There were also three wagons of supplies for the Army. The cattle were to be delivered to Fort Kearney, where a command of Johnston's army *en route* west would take them off the hands of the McCarthy brothers. Fort Kearney was situated near the present city of Kearney, Nebraska, and must not be confounded with Fort Phil Kearney, which was established some ten years later in Wyoming.

Young Cody's duty was to assist in driving and herding the loose cattle destined for the Army. The trip was a busy but uneventful one until the outfit reached Plum Creek, some thirty-five miles from Fort Kearney. A night guard was maintained, although no signs of Indians had been seen thus far on the trip.

While the train was taking its nooning at Plum Creek, and the wagonmasters and helpers were taking a snooze under the mess-wagons, waiting for the call to dinner, a sudden volley of shots was fired. Three men were guarding the browsing cattle, and these men were instantly killed at the first fire. With whoops and yells the Indians succeeded in stampeding the cattle—one small band attending to that part of the program, while the main body of savages charged the camp, intent on securing the scalps of the others of the train.

But the McCarthy boys were old Indian-fighters and were not to be caught napping, although outnumbered ten to one. A volley fired at the proper moment checked the rushing horde, although the fire of the Indians wounded one of the herders. Seeing that it was an unequal contest, the McCarthy brothers gave orders to retreat to the South Platte River.

After a quick consultation it was decided that the only thing to do was to follow the Platte River to Fort Kearney, keeping out of sight under the steep banks of the stream. In this way the party managed to retreat safely for several miles, opening fire upon the Indians when too hard pressed; the savages not daring to make an open charge.

About dusk the progress had become so rapid that young Billy Cody found himself lagging behind the others, and was apparently not missed. However, he kept the party in sight, and in this manner the dusk faded into darkness and the moon arose.

About ten o'clock little Billy happened to glance upward toward the steep bluffs under which the party was traveling, when he saw the plumed head of an Indian distinctly outlined against the sky-line. Without a word or warning shout to the others, Billy threw his gun to his shoulder, took a quick aim at the head and shoulders of the Indian and fired. Down into the bed of the stream tumbled the savage, as dead as a rabbit.

Although frightened nearly out of his wits, young Billy did not lose his presence of mind. The other men came rushing back, while the Indians, with yells of vengeance, came swarming to the edge of the bank, but a sharp volley sent them scattering, and the party was not again molested.

At dawn the McCarthy brothers led the

little party into Fort Kearney. Young Cody was the hero of the hour, and probably rightfully dubbed "the youngest Injun-killer on the plains."

II.—BUFFALO BILL'S SHADOW

AMONG the any scouts and frontiersmen who earned fame, notoriety and a pay-check from Uncle Sam during the Indian wars on the plains, from somewhere in the early '70's until his untimely death at the Slim Buttes Fight in Dakota on the eleventh of September, 1876, was a man of whom little has been written, but who was known in Army circles in those days as "Buffalo Bill's shadow."

His surname was White. His given name is in doubt. By some he was called Jim and by others Charlie White. But by everybody who knew him he was called "Buffalo Chips," a nickname handed him when, because of his intense admiration for Buffalo Bill Cody, he claimed the right to be known by some other name than plain Jim or Charlie; something befitting his love for the man he constantly followed as a sort of pal or "pard." Hence, he was immediately dubbed Buffalo Chips.

Gen. Charles King, now living in Milwaukee, was a lieutenant in the Fifth Cavalry during the '76 Sioux campaign, to which both Cody and White were attached as scouts. Some two weeks prior to the fight at Slim Buttes, Buffalo Bill left the command on the Yellowstone. He had theatrical engagements in the East to fill, and left Chips in the capacity as scout.

Lieut. King became quite friendly with Chips, and states that the man was conspicuous because of several traits not possessed by others of his calling. He never drank, never swore and was never known to lie.

In the terrible march of Gen. Crook's column from the Yellowstone across to Heart River and thence down to Deadwood, a detachment under Col. Anson Mills, hastening to Deadwood for supplies for Crook's ragged and starving army, encountered quite a bunch of Sioux in the rocky country known as Slim Buttes, and a hot fight took place. A bunch of determined warriors took refuge in a little washout or ravine from which they could not be dislodged, and Crook ordered the place to be stormed, in a last effort to force them to surrender.

Thousands of shots were fired by the infuriated cavalrymen into the "den." Among those who took an active part in this little engagement was Buffalo Chips. All alone he crept up one side of the gully from which he could look over and down upon the occupants. The air was charged with the smoke and noise of battle as Chips was seen to peer over the side of the gully, and then to bring his rifle to his shoulder.

Suddenly a puff of smoke floated from the upper end of the savage's retreat, followed by the resonant bang of an Indian rifle, and Chips sprang to his feet with an agonizing cry, "Oh, my ——, boys, they've got me!" and with a convulsive movement rolled over and down into the gully, shot through the heart.

And now, after forty-three years comes the aftermath. Chips and a private named Wenzel were buried on the Slim Buttes battle-field. The Slim Buttes Fight had long since been forgotten, when W. M. Camp, a Chicago newspaper man and student of Indian history, in June, 1917, went into the Dakota country to try to relocate the battle-field.

Aided by ranchers in that locality, but mostly by a map drawn for him by Gen. King, Mr. Camp after a brief search found the very spot where the Indian village had been pitched. He picked up nearly one hundred empty rifle-shells of the caliber and pattern used at that day, numerous camp utensils used by the Indians, arrow-points, a war-club, numerous pieces of burned teepee poles—the troops destroyed the village by fire after its capture—and had no trouble locating the very gully in which the Indian barricade had been made.

Further, the skeletons of two men were found, which Mr. Camp says were unmistakably those of poor Chips and Private Wenzel, although the bodies had been dragged from their shallow graves either by wild animals or the Sioux who remained in the vicinity after the battle. Indians never leave their dead on a field of battle, and therefore the finding of the skeletons of Chips and Wenzel were beyond doubt.

A marker has been placed on the scene of the Slim Buttes Fight—the spot where "Buffalo Bill's shadow" passed over the Great Divide in the performance of his duty.

CUSTOMS OF THE SERVICE

by Edwin L Sabin

Author of "A Frontier Romance," etc.

AT THE poor but proud little post of Fort Lyon on the ancient Santa Fé Trail up the Arkansas River of the Southwest plains Private William Bird of Company G, Third U. S. Infantry, a convicted thief, was about to undergo that stinging penalty known as "drumming out."

Neither the crime nor the punishment in the case of enlisted men was specified in the Articles of War. "Rules of Deportment," "Letters to a Young Female" and a Ward McAllister's "Social Dictums" may guide society, but the unwritten laws of polite intercourse preserve it. And so in that distinct inner circle, the Army, there are the more than ninety and nine Articles of War for the letter and the unnumbered Customs of the Service for the spirit. By the Customs of the Service the offense of Private Bird demanded a general court-martial according to the Articles of War.

Therefore eleven officers detailed from the posts of the department had sat upon the case of Private William Bird, who had stolen four dollars from the clothing of Private Terence O'Toole of his own platoon. He thus had technically performed "to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" (See Article of War 99) but—

"A thafe amongst us! A —— thafe amongst us!"

No man's property would be safe. To rank and file the misdemeanor was high crime; they themselves were the severest judges; they would support one another in a great many peccadillos but not in interspoliation.

The proof was plain; the vote unanimous, on count and on specification—guilty. The president colonel of the court was uninstructed further by the Articles of War covering courts-martial but he had the Customs of the Service—the Army's common law.

"Sentence, to be branded and drummed out," he pronounced.

Thus it came about that in due time, the same being nine-thirty of a morning, after guard-mount, the troops of little Fort Lyon were turned out to witness punishment. And from the guard-house here came the punishment detail escorting William Bird. First, an infantry drummer and fifer, playing lustily; then the squad of four men from Company G, in double file, bayonets fixed—the two front men with muskets at a reverse, the two rear men with muskets at a charge, and in the center, fenced by the almost crossing bayonets, William Bird, bareheaded, hair shaved to blueness, the buttons clipped from his blouse and upon his left cheek a "T" branded indelibly.

Under command of the sergeant of the guard the escort stepped to the Rogue's March. Hear the derisive melody:

Poor old sol-dier, poor old sol-dier
Tarred and feathered an' sent to ——
Be-cause he would not so-o-oldier!

Ex-Private William Bird—that not being his name, of course, in those days following the Civil War when the underworld of city and frontier town were being solicited by the recruiting circulars—strode defiantly, head high, eyes to the fore, but a flush deepening the bronze of his cheeks. Safe to say, among the two hundred men, his former companions of the blue, there was not a single sympathetic throb.

"Stealin' from his own mates! Out wid him!"

The little procession executed march and counter-march, making complete circuit of the parade-ground and displaying William Bird for all to see. Then it paced onward to the post limits whence the dusty government road trended eastward. The escort halted, the wailing music ceased, the bayonets jerked upright to a carry arms. Sergeant of the Guard Mulligan silently handed William Bird his forage cap—denuded of its crossed muskets—and one day's rations.

"Now get out wid ye. Keep goin'."

"To —— with you all!" William Bird retorted. "To —— with the uniform! Shaved me and branded me and turned me loose into the Injun country, have you?"

He choked.

"*A-ah*, the Injuns won't be after botherin' wid your scalp," the sergeant scornfully laughed. "An' I'm thinkin' you'll be a long time growin' hair on that big T, too!"

He barked orders to his squad and marched it back. Parade had been dismissed; the men were breaking ranks at their quarters. The four women of the post had said—

"The poor fellow!"

Their shoulder-strapped husbands had rebuked:

"Tut, tut! He committed a capital crime in the eyes of the men. The custom of the service, you know. He'll fall in with the first teamster camp."

And ex-Private William Bird, by alias formerly of the Bowery, lately of the Army, was trudging furiously, a small lone figure in the brown road upon which wagon-trains moved only under guard.

Before he should reach frontier civilization and civilian life at Junction City he had four hundred miles to go. It was a long, weary trail, that. Something of this must have risen from his subconsciousness, through his hot wrath and into his perspective, for tears boiled from his eyes and scalded his cheeks—the scarred cheek and the unscarred.

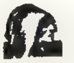
One bright spot he saw—a bottle of whisky awaiting him in a certain hollow tree known to his post fellows. A note informing him of that sop had been smuggled to him in the guard-house. The note was unsigned—just a scrawl, it was; but he shrewdly guessed that Terry O'Toole, his accuser, was the author. That should not save Terry if ever he met him; however, he was not refusing the whisky. He was too infernally dry. Many a bottle had been yielded by yon hollow tree after soldier and trader had exchanged greenback and wink.

He sighted a wagon-train approaching; he stepped aside into the chaparral of a little ravine and careless of the rattlesnakes made detour and came in again behind the train—with the bottle.

The six-and-eight-mule canopied wagons lumbered on, their drivers cracking whips and joking. Hard-baked infantry in the familiar dusty blue tramped in the wake.

William Bird took another hearty swig from the bottle and thus fortified, cursed them.

"*Ya-a-ah*, I'm done with that, you blue-belly slaves," he vaunted. "I'm free man, and no son-of-a-gun of a brass-bound, coffee-cooling officer sharp shall tell me when to get up and when to go to bed, either!"



HE WANDERED into the shade of the timber cloaking the river, finally drank from the river itself, and at last slept, out of view from the low-lying post.

In mid-afternoon he awakened to keen sense of company. He blinked, red-eyed, into the very visage of an Indian squatting well-nigh over him and for an instant the world swam in hideous dance of death.

The Indian leaned forward—he was a strapping fellow, with evident fondness for vermilion hues—and touched the branded cheek of ex-Private Bird, for the moment paralyzed. He grinned.

"No good, huh? Run off. Heap bad sojer, hey?"

Bird continued to blink.

"Treat sojer like squaw, hey?"

A number of other Indians had stolen forward. Bird was the center of a grinning circle. He tried to smile, but his fuzzy hair bristled. The reek of stale sweat and tobacco-smoke filled his nostrils. He fumbled for his whisky-bottle and when he saw that it was empty the Indians laughed. He rather guessed that he had emptied it himself. He could not buy his life now. The big Indian rather bruskly motioned to him to sit up.

"No 'fraid."

The Indian clapped his bare and greasy chest.

"Satanta no kill one sojer. Bah! Kill 'm all."

And he smiled amiably.

Satanta, of course. Chief of the Kiowa; shrewd, masterful and of settled convictions; a coppery gentleman with oblique mind which encouraged him to speak openly and practise secretly.

Ex-Private Bird resigned to give up the figurative ghost. Satanta grunted aside. The resultant confab in which several Indians gutturally orated while their companions listened was unintelligible to the prisoner. Presently a half-breed, by appearance, edged forward and with Satanta prompting addressed William Bird in fair English.

"Satanta ask how you come here."

"Got drummed out," growled Bird.

"Satanta think you stole hoss, mebbe."

"He's wrong there."

"Satanta say you been marked for t'ief. Disgraced like squaw. You from Fort Lyon?"

"Yes, I was."

"You no sojer now?"

"No, you're right I ain't."

"You love Fort Lyon? Nice place, huh?"

"Do I look like I'd any love for that ——?" Bird demanded.

"They treat you all-same squaw. Kiowa cut off bad squaw's nose; put bad bucks with squaws. Sojer cap'ns cut off bad sojer's hair; put mark on cheek; make him squaw. How you like that?"

"Ask Satanta how he'd like it."

Satanta may have understood. Rumor declared that he understood more English than he spoke. At any rate he smiled broadly and uttered peremptory instructions.

"Satanta say, how you like go back to Fort Lyon an' make your cap'n eat dirt?" the interpreter queried. "Cap'n turn you into squaw; you turn cap'n into squaw—you see how cap'n act when he treated like hoss-t'ief."

"I'm no horse-thief," corrected Bird.

"Mebbe yes," persisted the interpreter. "Sojers call Kiowa hoss-t'iefs. All right. Satanta say you know how to get into Fort Lyon. Run pickets. You take him; you show him. They brand you; they cut off hair; they drive you out. Injuns treat you good. Kiowa wipe Fort Lyon out. Steal all hosses. Make Fort Lyon poor. You be big man; plenty hosses, plenty squaw; tell Fort Lyon go to ——, mebbe so your cap'n too."

Bird's brain seethed—with the alcohol, with the past and with the future as opened. Affairs had shifted. He tasted of his bitterness and the bitterness was sweetened.

"If you no show Satanta——!"

And the interpreter drew edge of dirty hand across dirty throat; at which all the intent circle beamed.

"When?" Bird asked.

"In mornin'."

Bird swore roundly, feeding his revenge.

"Tell him all right," he said.

Satanta nodded.

"*Bueno.* Sojer no squaw; man. Heap man; make 'um good Kiowa. Scar cheek go 'way."

"Satanta say scar on cheek go 'way now; hair grow. You be big warrior," the interpreter translated.

They lay for the rest of the day in the brush near the river. The Kiowa ate of dried meat, drank of the water and dozed; and closely watched over by two or three, William Bird ate and drank and pretended to doze.

Wagon-trains passed along the road, as indicated by the clouds of dust and the faintly sounding voices of the teamsters. Through the farther distance floated the notes of drum, fife and bugle at Lyon. In his mind's eye he saw Lyon—paltry Lyon—very clearly, and he knew almost every moment what was going on there.

THE wind-swept, sun-blistered, frost-bitten miserable hole! *Agh!* Those wretched shanties of adobe-chinked stones roofed with warped raw lumber, not even sawed to line at the ends. The tents and the meager barracks, drafty and comfortless—where in Winter a fellow needs must shiver himself warm upon the thin hay-stuffed mattresses under single blankets, and in Summer burned by day and shivered again before dawn. The stables, of poles and crooked boards and cracked adobe—but thank the Lord he had

had nothing to do with the yellow-legs! The officers' "row" of three or four two-room shacks, where the "stripes" paired off in couples when married and house-kept separated only by flimsy partitions extending some eight feet up, with flour-sacking as a filler atop; and if not married, bached two also, to the room. The hard, bare, bleak parade-ground, fronting the flag-pole; the reveille before daylight in Winter and at sunrise in Summer and the —— turning out into the cold or the chill, the snow or the wind, for roll-call and police and stables, pills and pork and beans and guard-mount and drill.

Why, it was the most God-forsaken place on the continent! A man welcomed detail on paymaster escort here, or as wagon-train escort, with a chance to get a little action. For aside from the drills and regulation routine and making faces at the Indians there was nothing to do except play poker and drink whisky when whisky could be got.

And people called this "soldiering!" The enlisted man—what was he? A dog barked at by some fresh dude with stripes or cursed by some crusty old pot-bellied martinet whose liquor had disagreed with him.

"Drummed out!" He, Jack—no, William Bird! Shaved, branded, stripped and drummed out, while his sworn pals laughed! Oh, when the Government needed men to fight Injuns with and to slave in limbo, like, then it was Mister Bird; here, Mister Bird; bully for Private Bird and thirteen dollars a month and food and clothing furnished.

Maybe in time you can get to be a corporal, Mister Bird. And when you're a top sergeant—like me, the recruiting sergeant had said—you'll be free and easy and some punkins. Me—said the sergeant—I wouldn't trade jobs with no commissioned officer. I run my company and the captain is responsible. See?

But when Private Bird overstepped the line a little; got drunk, say, then the guard-house and hard-fatigue and if he stood up like a man and told an officer to go to blazes, then buck and gag him—spread-eagle him on the prairie; and when he borrowed a few dollars, unbeknownst to the owner, his bunkie, then drum him out for a thief—turn him loose with one day's rations and the —— help him!

A-ah! Ex-Private Bird spat viciously. The country, the Government, the white race—they were nothing and worse than nothing to him. He'd had enough. He'd go bad, as other men had been forced to go before him. And he'd collect his dues from Lyon first of all.

The call for retreat was sounding at the post; for evening parade and the lowering of the flag. He listened. He saw the line of infantry and cavalry in double rank. The colonel sat in front on his horse. The adjutant had command. The ranks came to parade-rest. The band, playing, marched and counter-marched along the line. "Retreat" sounded—a pretty tune, that! *Boom!* The evening gun had spoken and down fluttered the garrison flag.

Ranks were opened.

"Front!" "Carry—h'arms!" "Pre-sent—h'arms!" "Sir, the parade is formed!"

The colonel blared a few orders from the manual to show his authority. The first sergeants reported—

"Company G, all present or accounted for."

Maybe. But former Private Bird was not accounted for, yet!

"Parade is dismissed."

Humph! Now guard detail for some and for the rest poker for beans in tents and barracks and threadbare yarns and yawns. At nine o'clock tattoo and roll-call; at nine-fifteen taps for "lights out," and every underling to bed, while the sentries paced and looked at the stars and wondered when in the deuce relief would come.

There'd be a surprize party for Lyon before reveille. Meantime William Bird queried who was winning the beans this evening. If it had not been for that run of bad luck which broke him flat when his whisky-thirst was strongest—well, he wouldn't have been lying out here amidst a pack of stinking Injuns. How else could a man spend his pay at Lyon except for whisky? And when he didn't have the pay—well, he had to have the whisky, anyhow.

THE darkness fell. Bird shivered. The Kiowa around him were not cold at all. One of them held fast to a hide rope, attached to Bird's arm. But there was no need of this, Bird would have said. He'd lead 'em into Lyon, all right. He knew the very place, where a little ravine ran up close to Post No. 4. Then the fun would commence; probably wouldn't last long, but there'd be a lively scramble and horses missing and a tart reprimand from Sheridan for the colonel. Oh, yes, maybe a dead blue-belly or two. That's what they were there for, wasn't it? Curse 'em!

The darkness had scarcely grayed when Bird was awakened by rude thrust of foot or hand.

"Go, now."

He staggered up; he was shoved to the fore and with the rope still attached to his arm he stumbled through the brush amidst which his guides picked their way with uncanny precision. Ponies had been brought in; part of the Kiowa were mounted, part afoot.

His heart beat deafeningly and he had a raging headache, but the die was cast. The interpreter slipped beside him.

"Satanta say you walk straight or you die."

Arrow-head or knife-point pricked the neck of ex-Private Bird.

After an interminable time they had approached Lyon; the low buildings were yonder, located shortly back from the north bank of the Arkansas. Fort? An ugly wart on the desert, protected only by the sentry beats.

The grayness was misted obscure by a fog from the river. The dampened dried grasses under foot and hoof gave no sound. The Kiowa warriors halted. The rope was removed from ex-Private Bird's arm. Two bucks stationed themselves, one on either flank of him, their strung bows significant.

"Now," the interpreter whispered. "You show. Talk sojer guard, or—" and he made cutthroat sign. "Sojer guard die, Kiowa come. Good?"

"Good," muttered Bird, his throat husky.

He went forward. His lips were dry and he licked them. Who was on this beat at this hour? Somebody he knew, of course. He knew every man jack o' 'em, at Lyon; knew 'em too well—too blamed well. The escort bucks pressed close, snaky; they seemed to dissolve in the mist but he felt their presence.

He stole up the little ravine; heard the footsteps of the sentry; saw the sentry, muffled in his overcoat, his musket on his shoulder.

He had not long to live, that sentry; and Lyon had not long to sleep.

Prick of point urged Bird onward; his guards crouched pantherish; he crouched and as the sentry neared he hissed.

The effect was electric—in those days before electricity was such a common potential. The musket came to a ready in an instant.

* * *

"WHO'S there?"

The challenge had a steadiness and a warning. Suddenly there would be a shot and a hail; the shot first. Bird hastened to fend off.

"Me—Bird!"

"That thief? Get out, 'fore I call the guard!"

"No. Wait. Lemme talk. Who are you— Murphy?"

"I'm O'Toole. I can't talk wid you. What you after?"

"Listen, Terry. Want to tell you something. You—you—I——"

A merest rustle sounded. Kiowas were creeping on stealthy half-circuit.

"It's this way, Terry. I——"

"Who's wid you? I hear somebody."

"No. I'm alone. Listen here. I—I—" and William Bird's voice broke in a harsh caw wrung from frenzy: "For ——'s sake, Injuns! They're into you! Run! The guard! Post Number——"

Two bows twanged with vibrant hum and Bird choked and sank, still choking. The sentry's musket belched, shattering the grayness. He bawled, springing backward and crouching and rapidly slamming in a cartridge.

"Injuns! Injuns! Post Number Four!"

An arrow hissed and doubled him. From somewhere, unheard by William Bird, the Kiowa screech welled, but as by magic the post was dancing with sparks of candle and lantern; the guard-house streamed ruddy as the guard bolted out; the infantry drums were rolling; the cavalry trumpets were pealing "boots and saddles;" half-clad figures were scampering across the parade-ground and the Kiowa charge swerved shrieking, from the stables where in disciplined disorder infantry and troopers were speaking defiance with their long Toms and Spencer carbines. They might be shoeless and bootless, sockless, trouserless, shirtless and capless, but they had guns and cartridge-boxes.

CASUALTIES: "Terence O'Toole, private Company G, Third Infantry, sentry at Post No. 4, seriously wounded by an arrow. William Bird, ex-private, formerly of Company G, Third Infantry, dishonorably discharged the previous day, also was brought in, seriously wounded. As a prisoner to the Indians, at risk of his life he had warned O'Toole and thus had enabled him to give the alarm and save the post from what might have been an annoying raid. Both men will recover."

William Bird and Terence O'Toole occupied adjoining cots in the hospital. They had already shaken hands; the captain had been in, with speech short; and when one day no other than the colonel entered—well, what was to be said then? The brand on William Bird's cheek still burned, but only skin-deep.

The colonel fidgeted between the cots.

"You're getting on, my man?" This to Private O'Toole.

Private O'Toole grinned.

"Nicely, sorr. Thank you, sorr."

"How are you, Bird?"

"Comfortable, sir," wheezed Bird.

"*Hum!*" The colonel cleared his voice to a bark. "You're a tough piece, Bird. Two arrows into you. *Hum!* Don't try to talk. But you and O'Toole have got me in the —— of a mess."

"Yes, sir."

"Now what am I to do? You're out of the Army; approved by the department commander. I'll have to send in a report of this, too."

Ex-Private Bird might only cogitate and whisper politely—

"Yes, sir."

"And all for four dollars and a hullaballoo, and then a pack of greasy Indians and a soldier who wouldn't leave the post limits when ordered. *Hum!* In view of mitigating circumstances I'm recommending a revision of the record, Bird, in case you wish to stay by the uniform."

Bird gulped.

"Thank you, sir."

"Don't talk."

The colonel leaned a little over him.

"That mark, Bird—T for tough. But the surgeon thinks he can tone it down, my man, if you'll quit whisky. Whisky, though, will play the deuce with it."

"—— whisky, sir," muttered William Bird.

"Taken *ad libitum*," quoth the colonel, enigmatically. "Also money borrowed unknown to the owner."

"Sure, I'm sorry I ever mentioned the same, sorr," pleaded Terence O'Toole. "'Twas a misunderstandin' 'twixt friends, sorr. He stood ready to pay it back payday. I've been after alterin' my statement."

The colonel straightened.

"Mitigating circumstances — confound em!' There'll be some time before your status is settled again, Bird," he growled. "Regulations have to be followed. The department commander may act and he may choose to pass the whole affair on to General Sheridan; and egad, perhaps 'twill require a special act of Congress and the adjutant-general at Washington. We're not supposed to know anything out here—nothing except to obey orders and keep discipline and fight Indians and whisky. Meanwhile you're on—er, probation. That's it, Bird; probation."

The colonel turned upon his heels and stalked out. Bird and Terry gazed across at each other.

"Gorry, 'twas a long speech for the likes o' him, my lad," Terry ventured.

"Yes," panted William Bird. "All to the effect I'm to grow hair for the Injuns again. If the Kiowa ketch me——"

He weakly laughed.

"But darn if I ain't glad to be back with you blue-bellies once more."

Even his cheek no longer burned; however, his heart was very warm.

GUNS OF THE GODS

BY TALBOT MUNDY

A Five-Part Story
Conclusion

Author of "Barabbas Island," "In Aleppo Bazaar," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

THE Russian Princess Sonia Omanoff was accused of the murder of her husband and sentenced to life-imprisonment in the Siberian mines. Intriguing friends smuggled her off to Paris. During her subsequent residence there she fell in love with Bubru Singh, a Rajput maharaja on his educational "Grand Tour." She married him and he took her to his kingdom in India. There he died soon after the birth of their daughter, Yasmini. That is the introduction to this story.

Gungadhura Singh, Bubru's nephew, succeeded him as maharaja. The new ruler assigned a palace in Sialpore to Sonia for her personal use, and there the Princess Yasmini was brought up, a child who inherited from her mother all the cunning of Russian court-intriguers and from her father an intense love of India.

In Sialpore the money-lender Mukhum Dass leased a house to Dick Blaine. Blaine was an American mining engineer who had settled in Sialpore at the request of Gungadhura Singh for a mining expert to explore the old gold-workings in the hills. Dick Blaine was about forty; his wife, ten years younger.

Tess Blaine from the start loved India. One dawn she stole from her bed and stood, thinly clad, at her window to wonder at the rich colors of the gorgeous sunrise. After her husband had gone to work, a handsome and dandified young man called, a Rajput of Rajputs. Several slight mannerisms he affected led Tess to detect that her visitor was a woman, an exceedingly pretty young woman, in male attire.

"I am the rightful Maharanee of Sialpore," the girl confessed after admitting her sex, "only those fools of English have given Sialpore to Gungadhura, who is a pig, and loathes them."

Their chat was interrupted by the arrival of Tom Tripe. This eccentric fellow was drillmaster of the maharaja's troops and an admirer of the Blaines' democratic hospitality, so unlike the formality of the English residents. The woman in man's garb suddenly produced a Bank of India note for one thousand rupees and a fountain pen and before Tom entered the house scrawled Persian characters on the paper. Tess introduced her to Tom as Gunga Singh, but Tom immediately recognized her and exclaimed:

"So the Princess Yasmini is Gunga Singh this morning, eh? That won't do. I swore on my Bible oath to the maharaja day before yesterday that I'd left you closely guarded in the palace place across the river."

But protesting against the violation of her hospitality to all visitors, Tess refused to allow the drillmaster to take the princess to the palace.

The coming of the commissioner, leading his horse up the hill, spoiled all chances of Tom Tripe's persuading the princess to go with him. She whirled on Chamu, the Blaines' native butler, and accused him of stealing her one-thousand-rupee note.

"Feel in his cummerbund, Tom Tripe," she commanded. "I saw where the money went."

Tom felt in Chamu's sash and from its folds produced the note.

"Go to the palace and tell the maharaja that the princess is at the house of the commissioner *sahib*," she stormed at the terrified butler, while he protested that he was innocent. "And keep the thousand-rupee note to pay thy son's gambling-debt to Mukhum Dass."

Chamu slunk away to do her bidding.

When Commissioner Samson was being entertained on the veranda by Tess, and Tom had ridden away, Yasmini in the parlor listened to their conversation. The commissioner told Tess of the Sialpore Treasure. This was a vast ancestral hoard buried somewhere in that region. Although Gungadhura knew nothing of its whereabouts, it was the maharaja's rightful inheritance from his ancestors. The secret had died with Bubru Singh. It was generally thought that Blaine had come to Sialpore to search for the Treasure rather than for the gold in the hills.

"Gungadhura Singh is a spendthrift," he declared. "Gungadhura will surely claim the Treasure if your husband finds it."

He also informed Tess of many other local conditions and asked her if they were sure of their lease on the house.

"I've been told there's a question about the title. Some one's bringing suit against your landlord for possession on some ground or other."

After he had gone, Yasmini jubilantly kissed Tess, saying that she behaved perfectly. The princess was sure Samson had a trick up his sleeve.

When Dick returned that night and Tess told him the events of the day, he declared his fidelity to Gungadhura.

Yasmini went to Mukhum Dass. She told the money-lender she knew that he had asked an intercession of a priest of the god Jinendra to help him recover a title deed to the Blaines' house which Mukhum Dass had lost. Dhulap Singh, Gungadhura's agent, was eager to get possession of the house for his master, she said, for the maharaja believed the Sialpore Treasure was hidden under it. And if Dhulap Singh found the title deed, it would establish the claim to the house he was about to present in a lawsuit.

"Chamu the butler will pay his son's gambling-debt. Give him a receipt, saying nothing. Your part is silence in all matters. Otherwise the priest of Jinendra will transfer the title deed to Dhulap Singh. Preserve the bank-note for thirty days and keep silence."

ONE afternoon while Dick Blaine was at the mine Tess had several visitors. One was Utirupa, a handsome Rajput prince. During his call Tom Tripe gave Tess a letter from Yasmini. Last of all, after Utirupa had gone, came Samson, the commissioner. At his appearance Tom Tripe hid behind a clump of shrubbery. Tess and Samson strolled through the garden, and Samson, growing unconventionally familiar, suggested to Tess that he call her Theresa instead of Mrs. Blaine.

"I think you had better call me Mrs. Blaine," Tess replied, while Tom Tripe looked on in glee from his hiding-place.

"There's an intrigue going on," said Samson, "and you can help me. People whose business it is to keep me informed have reported that Tom Tripe is constantly carrying letters from the Princess Yasmini to that young Prince Utirupa who was here this afternoon. If Gungadhura Singh were found committing treason he'd be deposed. Then Utirupa would be maharaja, being next in line. And I want to find out what the princess has to do with it. I want you to make the acquaintance of the princess, visit her tonight and find out what are the letters she writes to Utirupa."

And he gave her a letter that would admit her to the palace of Yasmini past the guards posted there.

Tess consented. It was the command of a government official.

Dick Blaine returned and Tess showed him the letter Tom had brought her from Yasmini, urging Tess to visit her at the palace at once. Tess already suspected that Samson was a rascal playing for political fortunes.

So in their dog-cart Dick drove Tess to the palace. But there the guard insolently ordered them away and it was only the intervention of Tom that gained Tess admittance to the stronghold where Gungadhura kept Yasmini a prisoner. Dick waited outside while Tess made her call.

Yasmini's chief interest was in the food Tess had brought, for the princess had fasted since the latest attempt of Gungadhura to poison her.

Then Yasmini informed Tess that the vein of gold Dick had discovered would soon run into English territory, over which the maharaja had no jurisdiction. Samson, she said, would claim the gold and make a fortune.

"Your husband," insisted Yasmini, "must dig in a new place. Let your husband show Samson how poor the specimens are he is digging and that will be the end of Gungadhura. Then I shall escape. Your husband shall wait for me with his dog-cart."

To this Tess agreed.

Gungadhura attacked Yasmini's palace one night while Tess was visiting her. Both women managed to escape and rode together with Dick to the Blaines' house. Dick gave his consent to Tess' going on a journey with Yasmini.

A native, Sita Ram, overheard a conversation between the High Priest of Jinendra and Commissioner Samson. The High Priest claimed that one-half of the Treasure of Sialpore belonged to the priests. Samson finally agreed to give the priests five per cent. of the Treasure. Sita Ram found the pieces of a letter the commissioner had written. He put these together and got Tom Tripe, who went to the cellar of the Blaines' house, breaking in while Dick was away. Dick returned and found Tom in the cellar. He sent him away and dismissed Chamu from his service.

Tess and Yasmini then went on a journey by camel to an outlying territory. Tess was camel-sick and exhausted at the end of the trip, but quickly recovered after a rub-down by native women. For her it was a new experience.

There she spied upon the tryst of Yasmini and Prince Utirupa. They were already married in the ancient Indian style. Tess wondered at the beauty and romance of their meeting.

Tom Tripe reported his adventure at the Blaines' house to Gungadhura. The maharaja was furious that Tom did not take a "silver tube" he found in the cellar, "all wrought over with Persian characters." His stealing it, Tom said, was prevented by the unexpected return of Dick. But Gungadhura would not be appeased until the silver tube was in his hands.

Mukhum Dass stole the silver tube from the Blaines' cellar. While he was riding away with it he was mysteriously murdered.

Samson used his influence with government officials, who decreed that Gungadhura should be deposed and Utirupa installed in his place as Maharaja of Sialpore. To impress the natives, they ordered two batteries of artillery from military headquarters. These arrived while Tess and Yasmini were riding back to Sialpore.

"Hah," laughed Yasmini, up in the howdah now beside Tess on the elephant. "The guns of the gods! I said the gods were helping us!"

"Look like English guns to me " Tess answered.

"So think the English, too. So thinks Samson, who sent for them. So, too, perhaps Gungadhura will think when he knows the guns are coming. But I know better. I never promise the gods too much, but let them make me promises, and look on while they perform them. I tell you those are the GUNS OF THE GODS!"

A BAD man ruined by the run of luck
May shed the slime—they've done it,
Time and again they've done it.
That turn to aspiration out of muck
Is quick if heart's begun it,
If heart's desire's begun it.
But 'ware revenge if greater craft it is
That jockeyed him to recognize defeat,
Or greater force that overmastered his—
Efficiency more potent than deceit
That craved his crown and won it!
Safer the she-bear with her suckling young,
Kinder the hooked shark from a yardarm hung,
More rational a tiger by the hornets stung
Than perfidy outcozened. Shun it!

CHAPTER XX

"Millions! Think of it! Lakhs and crores!"

THE business of getting a maharaja off the throne, even in a country where the overlords are nervous and there is precedent, is not entirely simple, especially when the commissioner who recommends it has a name for indiscretion and ambition. The government of conquered countries depends almost as much on keeping clever administrators in their place as on fostering subdivision among the conquered.

So, very much against his will, Samson was obliged to go and see a high commissioner, who is a very important person indeed, and ram home his arguments between four walls by word of mouth. He did not take Sita Ram with him, so there is a gap in the story at that point, partly bridged by Samson's own sketchy account of the interview to Colonel Willoughby de Wing, overheard by Carlos de Sousa Braganza the Goanese club butler, and reported to Yasmini at third hand.

There were no aeroplanes or official motor cars at that time to take officials at outrageous speed on urgent business. But Samson's favorite study in his spare time was Julius Caesar, who usually traveled long distances at the rate of more than a hundred miles a day, and was probably short-winded from debauch into the bargain.

What the great Julius could do, Samson could do as well; but in spite of whip and spur and post, ruthless robbery of other people's reserved accommodation, and a train caught by good luck on the last stage, it took him altogether seven valuable days and nights. For there was delay, too, while the high commissioner wired to Simla in code for definite permission to be drastic.

The telegram from the Secretary of State pointed out, as Samson had predicted that it would, the desirability of avoiding impeachment and trial if that were possible, in view of the state of public unrest in India and the notorious eagerness of Parliament at home to interfere in Indian affairs.

"Get him to abdicate!" was the meat of the long message.

"Can you do it?" asked the high commissioner.

"Leave that to me," boasted Samson. "And now this other matter. These islands as they're called. It's absurd and expensive to continue keeping up a fort inside the maharaja's territory. There's no military advantage to us in having it so near our border. And there are totally unnecessary problems of administration entailed by the maharaja administering a small piece of territory on our side of the river.

"I've had a contract drawn for your approval—Sir Hookam Bannerjee drew it, he's a very able lawyer—stipulating with Utirupa, in consideration of our recognition of himself and his heirs as rulers of the State of Sialpore, that he shall agree to exchange his palace and land on our side of the river against our fort on his side. What do you think of it?"

"It isn't a good bargain. He ought to give us more than that in the circumstances, against a fort and—and all that kind of thing."

"It's a supremely magnificent bargain!" retorted Samson. "Altogether overlooking what we'll save in money by not having to garrison that absurd fort, it's the best financial bargain this province ever had the chance of."

"How d'ye mean?"

Samson whispered. Even those four solid walls were not discreet enough.

"The Treasure of Sialpore is buried in the River Palace grounds! Millions! Think of it—millions! Lakhs and crores!"

The high commissioner whistled.

"That 'ud mean something to the province, wouldn't it! Show me your proofs."

How Samson got around the fact that he had no actually definite proofs he never told. But he convinced the high commissioner, who never told either, unless to somebody at Simla, who buried the secret among the State Department files.

"I'll wire Simla," said the high commissioner presently, "for permission to authorize you to set your signature to that contract on behalf of the Government. The minute I get it I'll wire you to Sialpore and confirm by letter. Now you'd better get back to your post in a hurry.

"And don't forget, it would be difficult in a case like this to err on the side of silence, Samson. Who'll have to be told?"

"Nobody but Willoughby de Wing. I'll have to ask him for troops to guard the River Palace grounds. There's a confounded American digging this minute in the River Palace grounds by arrangement with Gungadhura. He'll have to be stopped, and I'll have to make some sort of explanation."

"What's an American doing in Sialpore?"

"Prospecting. Has a contract with Gungadhura."

"Um-m-m! We'll have Standard Oil in next! Better point out to Utirupa that contracts with foreigners aren't regarded cordially."

"That's easily done," said Samson. "Utirupa is nothing if not anxious to please."

"Yes, Utirupa is a very fine young fellow—and a good sportsman, too, I'm told."

"There is no reason why Utirupa should recognize the contract between Gungadhura and the American. It was a private contract—no official sanction. If Gungadhura isn't in position to continue it——"

"Exactly. Well—good-by. I'll look forward to a good report from you."

* * *

BY TRAIN and horse and tonga Samson contrived to reach Sialpore on the morning before the day set for the polo tournament. He barely allowed himself time to shave before going to see Dick Blaine, and found him, as he expected, at the end of a tunnel nearly a hundred yards long that started from inside the palace wall and passed out under it. The guards at the gate did not dare refuse the commissioner admission.

So far, Dick had not begun demolition of the palace, but had dragged together enough lumber by pulling down sheds and outhouses. He was not a destructive-minded man.

"Will you come outside and talk with me?" Samson shouted amid the din of pick-and-shovel work.

"Sure."

Dick's poker face was in perfect working order by the time they reached the light. But he stood with his back to the sun and let Samson have the worst of the position.

"You're wasting time and money, Blaine. I've come to tell you so."

"Now—that's good of you."

"Your contract with Gungadhura is not worth the paper it's written on."

"How so?"

"He will not be maharaja after noon today."

"You don't mean it!"

"That information is confidential, but the news will be out by tomorrow. The British Administration intends to take over all the land on this side of the river. That's confidential too.

"Between you and me, our Government would never recognize a contract between you and Gungadhura. I warned you once, and your wife a second time."

"Sure, she told me."

"Well. You and I have been friends, Blaine. I'd like you to regard this as not personal. But——"

"Oh, I get you. I'm to call the men off? That it?"

"You've only until tomorrow in any case."

"And Gungadhura, broke, to look to for the pay-roll! Well—as you say, what's the use?"

"I'd pay your men off altogether, if I were you."

"They're a good gang."

"No doubt. We've all admired your ability to make men work. But there'll be a new maharaja in a day or two, and, strictly between you and me, as one friend to another, there'll be a very slight chance indeed of your getting a contract from the incoming man to carry on your mining in the hills. I'd like to save you trouble and expense."

"Real good of you."

"Er—found anything down there?"

Samson nodded over his shoulder toward the tunnel mouth.

"Not yet."

"Any signs of anything?"

"Not yet."

Samson looked relieved.

"By the way. You mentioned the other day something about evidence relating to the murder of Mukhum Dass."

"I did."

"Was it anything important?"

"Maybe. Looked so to me."

"Would you mind giving me an outline of it?"

"You said that day you knew who murdered Mukhum Dass?"

"Yes. When I got in this morning there was a note on my desk from Norwood, the superintendent of police, to say that they've arrested your butler and cook and the murderer of Mukhum Dass, all hiding together near a railway station. The murderer has squealed. They often do when they're caught. He has told who put him up to it."

"Guess I'll give you this, then. It's the map out of the silver tube that Mukhum Dass burgled from my cellar. Gungadhura gave it to me with instructions to dig here. You'll note there's blood on it."

Samson's eyes looked hardly interested as he took it. Then he looked, and they blazed. He put it in his inner pocket hurriedly.

"Too bad, Blaine!" he laughed. "So you even had a map of the Treasure, eh? Another day or two and you'd have forestalled us. I suppose you'd a contract with Gungadhura for a share of it?"

"You bet."

"Well—it wasn't registered. I doubt if you could have enforced it. Gungadhura is an awful rascal."

"Gee!" lied Dick. "I never thought of that! I had my other contract registered all right—in your office—you remember?"

"Yes. I warned you at the time about Gungadhura."

"You did. I remember now. You did. Well, I suppose the wife and I'll be heading for the U. S. A. soon, richer by the experience. Still—I reckon I'll wait around and see the new maharaja in the saddle, and watch what comes of it."

"You've no chance, Blaine, believe me!"

"All right; I'll think it over. Meanwhile, I'll whistle off these men."

The next man Samson interviewed was Willoughby de Wing.

"Let me have a commissioner's escort, please," he demanded. "I'm going to see Gungadhura now. You'd better follow up with a troop to replace the maharaja's guards around his palace. We can't put him under arrest without impeaching him; but—make it pretty plain to the guard that they're there to protect a man who has abdicated; no one's to be allowed in, and nobody out unless he can explain his business.

"Then, can you spare some guards for another job? I want about twenty men on the River Palace at once. Caution them carefully. Nobody's to go inside the grounds. Order the maharaja's guards away.

"It's a little previous. His officers will try to make trouble of course. But an apology at the proper time will cover that."

"What's the new excitement?" asked the colonel. "More murders? More princesses out at night?"

"This is between you and me. Not a word to a living soul, de Wing!"

Samson paused, then whispered—

"The Treasure of Sialpore!"

"What—in the palace?"

"In the grounds! There's a tunnel already half-dug, leading toward it from inside the palace wall. I've proof of the location in my pocket."

"Gad's teeth!" barked Willoughby de Wing. "All right, I'll have your escort in a jiffy. Have a whisky and soda, my boy, to stiffen you before the talk with Gungadhura."

A LITTLE less than half an hour later Samson drove across the bridge in the official landau, followed by an officer, a *jemadar*, a *naik* and eight troopers of de Wing's Sikh cavalry. Willoughby de Wing drove in the carriage with him as a witness. They entered the palace together, and were kept waiting so long that Samson sent the major domo to the maharaja a second time with a veiled threat to repeat, said slowly.

"Say the business is urgent and that I shall not be held responsible for consequences if he doesn't see me at once."

"Gad!" swore de Wing, screwing in his monocle. "I'd like a second whisky and soda. I suppose there's none here. I hate to see a man broke—even a blackguard."

Gungadhura received them at last, seated, in the official durbar room. The bandages were gone from his face, but a strip of flesh-colored court-plaster from eye to lip gave him an almost comical look of dejection, and he lolled in the throne-chair with his back curved and head hung forward, scowling as a man does not who looks forward to the interview.

Samson cleared his throat, and read what he had to say, holding the paper straight in front of him.

"I have the disagreeable task of informing your Highness that your correspondence with the Mahsudi tribe is known to his Majesty's Government."

Gungadhura scowled more deeply still, but made no answer.

"Amounting as it does to treason, at a time when his Majesty's Government are embrarrassed by internal unrest, your act can not be overlooked."

Gungadhura made a motion as if to interrupt, but thought better of it.

"In the circumstances I have the honor to advise your Highness that the wisest course, and the only course that will avoid impeachment, is abdication."

Gungadhura shook his head violently.

"I can explain," he said. "I have proofs."

Samson turned the paper over—paused a moment—and began to read the second sheet.

"It is known who murdered Mukhum Dass. The assassin has been caught, and has confessed."

Gungadhura's eyes, which had been dull and almost listless hitherto, began to glare like an animal's.

"I have here—" Samson reached in his pocket—"a certain piece of parchment—a map in fact—that was stolen from the body of Mukhum Dass. Perhaps your Highness will recognize it. Look!"

Gungadhura looked, and started like a man stung. Samson returned the map to his pocket, for the maharaja almost looked like trying to snatch it; but instead he collapsed in his chair again.

"If I abdicate—?" he asked, as if his throat and lips could hardly form the words.

"That would be sufficient. The assassin would then be allowed to plead guilty to another charge there is against him, and the matter would be dropped."

"I abdicate!"

"On behalf of his Majesty's Government I accept the abdication. Sign this, please."

Samson laid a formal, written act of abdication on the table by the throne. Gungadhura signed it. Samson took it back and folded it away.

"Arrangements will be made for your Highness to leave Sialpore tomorrow morning, with a sufficient escort for your protection. Provision will be made in due course for your private residence elsewhere. Be good enough to hold yourself and your family in readiness tomorrow morning."

"But my son!" exclaimed Gungadhura. "I abdicate in favor of my son!"

"In case of abdication by a reigning prince, or deposition of a reigning prince," said Samson, "the Government of India reserves the right to appoint his successor, from among eligible members of his family if there be any, but to appoint his successor in any case. There is ample precedent."

"And my son?"

"Will certainly not be considered."

Gungadhura glanced about him like a frenzied man, and then lay back in a state of near-collapse. Samson and de Wing both bowed and left the room.

"Poor devil!" said de Wing. "I'm sorry for him."

"Would you be a good fellow," said Samson, "and send off this wire for me? There—I've added the exact time of the abdication.

"I've got to go now and summon a durbar of Gungadhura's State officers, and tell them in confidence what's happened. I shall hint pretty broadly that Utirupa is our man, and then ask them which prince they'd like to have succeed."

"Good!" said de Wing. "Nothing like tact. Why not meet me at the club for a whisky and soda afterward?"

Inside the durbar hall Gungadhura sat alone for just so long as it took the sound of the closing door to die away. Then another door close behind the throne-chair opened, and Patali entered. She looked at him with pity on her face, and curiosity.

"That American sold you," she said after a minute.

"Eh?"

"I say, that American sold you. He sold you, and the map, and the Treasure to the English."

"I know it! I know it!"

"If I were a man——"

She waited, but he gave no sign of manhood.

"If I were a man I know what I would do."

"Peace, Patali. I am a ruined man. They will all desert me as soon as the news is out. They are deserting now; I feel it in my bones. I have none to send."

"Send? It is only maharajas who must send. *Men* do their own work. I know what I would do to an American or any other man who sold me."

The king sent his army and said: "Lo, I did it. Consider my prowess and my strategy!" But the gods laughed.—*Eastern proverb.*

CHAPTER XXI

"Guns of the Gods."

VERY shortly after dawn on the morning of the polo game Yasmini left the Blaines' house on business of her own. The news of Gungadhura's abdication was abroad already, many times multiplied by each mouth until two batteries of guns had become an army corps. But what caused the greatest excitement was the news, first of all whispered, then confirmed, that Gungadhura himself was missing.

That disturbing knowledge was the factor that prevented Yasmini from returning to her own rifled palace and making the best of it; for it would take time to hedge the place about properly with guards. There was simply no knowing what Gungadhura might be up to.

She judged it probable that he had seen through her whole plot in the drear light of revelation that so often comes to stricken men, and in that case her own life was likely in danger every second he was still at liberty. But she sent word to Utirupa, too, to be on the alert. And she saw him herself that morning, in her favorite disguise of a rangar *zemindari*, which is a Rajput landowner turned Mohammedan. The disguise precluded any Hindu interference, and Mohammedans on that countryside, who might have questioned her, were scarce.

The polo did not take place until late afternoon because of the heat, but the grounds were crowded long before the time by a multicolored swarm in gala mood, whom the artillerymen, pressed into service as line-keepers, had hard work to keep back of the line. There was a rope around three sides of the field, but it broke repeatedly, and in the end the gunners had to be stationed a few feet apart all down the side opposite the grand stand to keep the crowd from breaking through.

There were carriages in swarms, ranging from the spider-wheel gig of a British subaltern to the four-in-hand of Rajput nobility—kept pretty carefully apart, though. The conquerors of India don't mix with the conquered, as a rule, except officially. And there were half a dozen shuttered carriages that might have contained ladies, and might not; none knew.

It was a crowd that knew polo from the inside outward, and when the ponies were brought at last and stood in line below the grand stand, each in charge of his *sais*, there grew a great murmur of critical approval; for the points of a horse in Rajputana are as the lines of a yacht at Marblehead, and the marks of a dog in Yorkshire; the very urchins know them.

The Bombay side of India had been scoured pretty thoroughly for mounts for that event. The Rajputs had on the whole the weight of money, and perhaps the showiest ponies; but the English team—nearly all darker in color as it happened, except for one piebald—looked trained up to the last notch and bore the air of knowing just what to expect, that is as unmistakable in horses as in men.

Tom Tripe was there with his dog. Trotters had the self-imposed and wholly agreeable task of chasing all unattached dogs off the premises. But Tom Tripe himself was keeping rather in the background, because technically, as a servant of Gungadhura, he was in a delicate position.

A voice that he could swear he almost recognized whispered to him in the crowd that the English were going to forbid the next maharaja to have any but employees of his own race. And a laugh that he could pick out of a million greeted his change of countenance. But though he turned very swiftly, and had had no brandy since morning to becloud his vision, he failed to see his tormentor.

Tess and Dick drove down in ample time, as they had imagined, and found hard work to squeeze the dog-cart in between the phalanxes of wheels already massed on the ground. When they went to the grand stand it was to find not a seat left in the rows reserved for ordinary folk; so Samson, who arrived late too, magnificent in brand-new riding-boots, invited them to sit next him in front.

The ground was in perfect condition—a trifle hard, because of the season, but flat as a billiard table and as fast as even Rajputs could desire. A committee of them had been going over it daily for a week past, recommending touches here, suggesting something there, neglecting not an inch, because the finer stick-work of the Rajput team would be lost on uneven ground; and the English had been sportsmen enough to accommodate them without a murmur.

When a little bell rang and the teams turned out for the first *chukker* in deathly silence, it was evident at once what the Rajput strategy would be. They had brought out their fastest ponies to begin with, determined to take the lead at the start and hold it.

ONE could hear the crowd breathe when the whistle blew; for in India polo is a game to watch, not an opportunity for small talk. Instantly the ball went clipping toward the English goal, to be checked by Topham at full-back, who sent it out rattling to the right wing.

But the Rajput left-wing man, a young cousin of Utirupa, cut in like an arrow. The ball crossed over to the right wing, where Utirupa took it, galloping down the line on a chestnut mare that had the speed of wind.

Topham, racing to intercept the ball, missed badly; a second later the Rajput center thundered past both men and scored the goal, amid a roar from the spectators, less than a minute from the start.

"Dick!" Tess exclaimed. "You ought to be ashamed of me! I'm rooting for the Rajputs against my own color!"

"So'm I," he answered. "I wish to glory there was some one here to bet with."

Samson overheard.

"Which way do you want to bet?" he asked.

"A thousand on the Rajputs."

"Thousand what?"

"Dollars. Three thousand rupees."

"Confound it, you Americans are all too rich! Never mind, I'll take you."

"A bet!" Dick answered, and both men wrote it down.

About nine words were said by the captain of the English team as they rode back to the center of the field, and when the ball was in play again there was no more of the scattering open play that suited the other side, but a close, short-hitting, shop-and-follow method that tried ponies' tempers, and a scrimmage every ten yards that made all unavailing the Rajputs' speed and dash. Whenever a stroke of lightning wrist-work sent the ball clipping down-field Topham returned it to the center and the scrimmage began all over again. The first *chukker* ended in mid-field, with the score 1—0.

Both sides brought out fresh ponies for the second, and the Rajputs tried again to score with their favorite tactics of long-hitting and tremendous speed. But the English were playing dogged-does-it, and Topham, on the piebald at full back, was invincible. Nothing passed him.

Nor were the English slow. Three times they seized opportunity in mid-field and rode with a burst of fiery hitting toward the Rajput goal.

Three times the gunners down the line began to yell. The English team were getting together, and the Rajputs a little wild. But the *chukker* ended with the same score 1—0.

"How d'you feel about it now?" asked Samson, looking as calm as the English habitually do whenever their pulse beats furiously.

"I'd like to bet too!" Tess laughed, leaning across.

"What—the same-sized bet?"

"No, a hundred."

"Dollars?"

"Rupees," she laughed. "I'm not so rich as my husband."

"Can't refuse a lady," Samson answered, noting the bet down. "I shall be a rich man tonight. They play a brilliant game, those fellows, but we always beat them in the end."

"How do you account for that?" Dick asked, suspecting what was coming.

"Oh, in a number of ways, but chiefly because they lack team-loyalty among themselves. They're all jealous of one another, whereas our fellows play as a unit."

As if in confirmation of Samson's words the Rajput team seemed rather to go to pieces in the third *chukker*. There was the same brilliant individual hitting and as much speed as ever, but the genius was not there. In vain Utirupa took the ball out of a scrimmage twice and rode away with it. He was not backed up in the nick of time, and before the end of the third minute the English scored.

"You'd better go and hedge those bets," laughed Samson when the *chukker* ended. "There are plenty of the native gentry over yonder who'd be delighted to gamble a fortune with you yet."

DICK scarcely heard. He was watching Utirupa, who stood by the pony-line where a *sais* was doing something to a saddle-girth. A *rangar* came up to the prince and spoke to him

—a slim, young-looking man, a head the shorter of the two, with a turban rather low over his eyes, and the loose end of it, for some reason, across the lower half of his face.

Dick nudged Tess, and she nodded. After that Utirupa appeared to speak in low tones to each member of his own team.

"I beg your pardon. What was that you said?" asked Dick.

"I say you'd better hedge those bets."

"I'll double with you if you like."

"Good Heavens, man! I've wagered a month's pay already. Go and bet with Willoughby de Wing or one of the gunner officers."

The *rungar* disappeared into the crowd before the teams rode out for the fourth encounter, and Tess, who had made up her mind to watch the shuttered carriages that stood in line together in a roped enclosure of their own, became too busy with the game.

Something had happened to the Rajputs. They no longer played with the gallery-appealing smash-and-gallop fury that won them the first goal, although their speed held good and the stick-work was marvelous. But they seemed more willing now to mix it in the middle of the field, and to ride off an opponent instead of racing for the chance to shine individually. It became the English turn to drive to the wings and try to clear the ball for a hurricane race downfield; and they were not quite so good at those tactics as the other side were.

All the rest of that game until the eighth, *chukker* after *chukker*, the Rajputs managed to reverse the usual procedure, obliging the English team to wear itself out in terrific efforts to break away, tiring men and ponies in a tight scramble in which neither side could score.

"It looks like a draw after all," said Samson. "Bets off in that case, I suppose? Disappointing game in my opinion."

" 'Tisn't over yet," said Dick.

The Rajputs were coming out for the last *chukker* with their first and fastest ponies that had rested through the game; and they were smiling. Utirupa had said something that was either a good joke or else vastly reassuring.

As a matter of fact he had turned them loose at last to play their old familiar game again, and from the second that the ball went into play the crowd was on tiptoe, swaying this and that way with excitement.

In vain the English sought to return to the scrimmage play; it was too late. The Rajputs had them rattled. Topham at full back on the piebald was a stone wall, swift, hard-hitting and resourceful, but in vain. Swooping down the wings, and passing with the dexterous wrist-work and amazing body bends that they alone seem able to accomplish, they put the English team on the defensive and kept them there.

Once, at about half-time, by a dash all together the English did succeed in carrying the ball down-field, but that was their last chance, and they missed it. In the last two minutes the Rajputs scored two goals, the last one driven home by Utirupa himself, racing ahead of the field with whirling stick and the thunder of a neck-and-neck stampede behind him.

"That'll be your month's pay," laughed Dick. "I hope you won't starve for thirty days."

The crowd went mad with delight and swarmed on to the ground, shouting and singing. Samson got up, looking as if he rather enjoyed to lose three thousand rupees in an afternoon.

"If you'll excuse me," he said, "I'll go and shake hands with Utirupa. He deserves congratulation. It was headwork won that game."

"I wonder what *she* said to him at the end of the third *chukker*," Tess whispered to Dick.

Samson found Utirupa giving orders to the *saises*, and shook hands with him.

"Good game, Utirupa! Congratulate you. By the way; there's going to be a meeting on important business in my office half an hour from now. When you've had a tub and a change, I wish you'd come and join us. We want a word with you."

"Where are the gunners going to?" asked Tess. "The men who kept the line—look! They're all trooping off the ground in the same direction."

"Dunno," said her husband. "Let's make for the dog-cart and drive home. If we hang around Samson 'll think we're waiting for that money."

Half an hour after that Utirupa presented himself at Samson's office in the usual neat Rajput dress that showed off his lithe figure and the straightness of his stature. There was quite a party there to meet him—Samson, Willoughby de Wing, Norwood, Sir Hookam Bannerjee, Topham (still looking warm and rather weary after the game)—and outside on the open ground beyond the compound wall two batteries of horse-guns were drawn up at attention. But if Utirupa felt surprized he did not show it.

"To make a short story of a long one, Prince Utirupa," Samson began at once, "as you know, Gungadhura abdicated yesterday. The throne of Sialpore is vacant, and you are invited to accept it. I have here the required authority from Simla."

Utirupa rose from his chair and bowed.

"I am willing to accept," he answered quietly. His face showed no emotion.

"There is one stipulation, though," said Samson. "We are tired of these foolish islands—our territory in yours and yours in ours. There's a contract here. As your first official act—there's no time like the present—we want you to exchange the River Palace on this side of the river for our fort on your side."

Utirupa said never a word.

"It's not a question of driving a bargain," Samson went on. "We don't know what the palace may be worth, or what is in it. If there is any valuable furniture you'd like removed, we'll waive that point; but on the terms of the contract we exchange the fort, with the guns and whatever else is there except the actual harness and supplies of the garrison, against the land and palace and whatever it contains except furniture."

Utirupa smiled—perhaps because the guns in that fort were known to date from before the Mutiny.

"Will you agree?"

"I will sign," said Utirupa.

And he signed the contract there and then in presence of all those witnesses. Ten minutes later as he left the office the waiting batteries fired him a fourteen-gun salute, that the world might know how a new maharaja occupied the throne of Sialpore.

Meanwhile up at the house on the hill Tess and Dick found Yasmini already there ahead of them, lying at her ease, dressed as a woman of women, and smoking a cigaret in the window-seat of the bedroom Tess had surrendered to her.

"What was it you said to him after the third *chukker*?" was the first question Tess asked.

"You recognized me?"

"Sure. So did my husband. What did you say to him?"

"Oh, I just said that if he hoped to win he must play the game of the English, and play it better, that was all. He won, didn't he? I didn't stay to the end. I knew he would win."

Almost as they spoke the fourteen-gun salute boomed out from across the river and echoed from the hills.

"Ah!" said Yasmini. "Listen! The Guns of the Gods! He is maharaja now."

"But what of the Treasure?" Tess asked her. "Dick told me this morning that the English have a guard all round the River Palace, and expect to dig the treasure up themselves."

"Perhaps the English need it more than he and I do," Yasmini answered.

THAT evening Tom Tripe turned up, and Yasmini came down-stairs to talk with him, Trotters remaining outside the window with his ash-colored hair on end and a succession of volcanic growls rumbling between flashed teeth.

"What's the matter with the dog, that he won't come in?" asked Tess.

"Nothing, ma'am. He's just encouraging himself. He stays here tonight."

"Trotters does? Why?"

"It's known all over Sialpore that her ladyship's staying here; and Gungadhura's at large somewhere. You're well guarded; that's been seen to, but Trotters stays for double inner guard.

"One or two men might go to sleep. Gungadhura might pass them a poisoned drink, or physic their rations in some way. And then, they're what you might call fixed-point men—one here, one there, with instructions that they'll be skinned alive and burned if they leave their exact position.

"Trotters has a roving commission, to nose and snarl wherever he's minded. You can't poison him, for he won't eat from strangers. You can't see to knife him in the dark, because he's ash-colored and moves too swift.

"And if Gungadhura comes an' shoots at where Trotters' eyes gleam—well—Mr. Dick Blaine is liable to wake up an' show his Highness how Buffalo Billy imitates a Gatling gun. The house is safe, but I thought I'd come and mention it."

"When will my palace be ready?" Yasmini asked.

"Tomorrow or the next day, your ladyship. There wasn't so much taken out after all, though a certain amount was stolen. The first orders the new maharaja gave were to have your palace attended to; and some of the stolen stuff is coming in already; word went out that if stuff was returned there'd be nothing said, but if it weren't returned there'd be something brand new in the line of trouble for all concerned.

"The priests have been told to pass the word along. 'No obedience from priests, no priests at the coronation ceremony!' It's my belief from about two hours' observation that we've got a maharaja now with guts, if you'll excuse my bad French, please, ma'am."

"What does it matter to you, Tom, whether he is good or not?" Yasmini asked mischievously. "Isn't there a rumor that the English won't allow any but native-born instructors after this?"

"Ah, naughty, naughty!" he laughed, shaking a gnarled forefinger. "I thought it was your voice in the crowd. Your ladyship 'ud like to have me all nervous, wouldn't you? Well—if Tom Tripe was out of a job tomorrow, the very first person he'd apply to for a new one would be the Princess Yasmini; and she'd give it him."

"What have you in your hand?" Yasmini asked.

"Gungadhura's turban that he wore the night when Akbar chased him down the street."

Yasmini nodded, understanding instantly.

Five minutes later, after a rousing stiff night-cap, Tom took his leave. They heard his voice outside the window—

"Trotters!"

The dog's tail beat three times on the veranda.

"Take a smell o' this!"

There was silence, followed by a growl.

"If he comes—kill him! D'ye understand? Kill him! There—there's the turban for you to lie on an' memorize the smell! Kill him! Ye understand?"

A deep growl was the answer, and Tom Tripe marched off toward the stables for his horse, whistling "Annie Rooney" lest some too enthusiastic watcher knife him out of a shadow.

"When I am maharanee," said Yasmini, "Tom Tripe shall have the title of *Sirdar*, whether the English approve of it or not."

The Creator caused flowers to bloom in the desert and buried jewels in the bosom of the earth. That is lest men should grow idle, wallowing in delights they have, instead of acquiring merit in the search for beauty that is out of reach.—*Eastern proverb.*

CHAPTER XXII

"Making one hundred exactly."

TECHNICALLY Yasmini was as much Maharanee of Sialpore as she would ever be, the moment that the fourteen-gun salute boomed out across the river. For the English do not recognize a maharanee except as courtesy title. The reigning prince is maharaja, and, being Hindu, can have one wife or as many as he pleases. Utirupa and Yasmini claimed to have married themselves by Gandharwa rite, and, had she chosen, she could have gone to live with him that minute.

But that would not have paid her in the long run. The priests, for instance, whom she despised with all her character, would have been outraged into lifelong enmity; and she knew their power.

"It is one thing," she told Tess, "to determine to be rid of cobras; but another to spurn them with your hand and foot. They bite!"

Then again, it would not have suited her to slip quietly into Utirupa's palace and assume the reins of hidden influence without the English knowing it. She proposed taking uttermost advantage of the purdah custom that protects women in India from observation and makes contact between them and the English almost impossible.

But she intended, too, to force the Indian Government into some form of recognition of her.

"If they acknowledge me, they lock swords with every woman in the country. Let them deny me afterward, and all those swords will quiver at their throats. A woman's sword is subtler than a man's."

(That was the secret of her true strength in all the years that followed. It was never possible to bring her quite to bay, because the women pulled hidden strings for her in the sphere that is above and below the reach of governments.)

So she moved back into her own palace, where she received only Tess of all the Anglo-Saxon women in India.

"Why don't you keep open house to Englishwomen, and start something?" Tess asked her.

But Yasmini laughed.

"My power would be gone. Do you fight a tiger by going down on all-fours with him and using teeth and claws? Or do you keep your distance and use a gun?"

"But the Englishwomen are not tigresses."

"If they were I would laugh at them. Trapping tigers is a job the jungle coolies can attend to well.

"But if I admit the Englishwomen into my palace they will come out of curiosity. And out of pity or compassion or some such odious emotion they will invite me to their homes, making an exhibition of me to their friends.

"Should I be one of them? Never! Would they admit other Indian women with me? Certainly; any one I cared to recommend. They would encourage us to try to become their social equals, as they would call it, always backing away in front of us and beckoning, we striving, and they flattered.

"No! I will reverse that. I will have the Englishwomen striving to enter *our* society.

"They shall wake up one day to discover there is something worth having that is out of reach. *Then* see the commotion! Watch the alteration *then!*

"Today they say, when they trouble to think of us at all, 'Come and visit us; our ways are good; we will not hurt you; come along,' as the children call to a kitten in the street.

"*Then* they will say: 'We have this and that to offer. We desire your good society. Will you admit us if we bring our gifts?'

"That will be another story; but it will take time."

"More than time," Tess answered her. "Genius."

"I have genius. That is why I know too much to declare war on the priests. I shall have a proper wedding, and the priests shall officiate, I despising them and they aware of it.

"That will be their first defeat. They shall come to my marriage as dogs come to their mistress when she calls—and be whipped away again if they fawn too eagerly. They will not dare refuse to come, because then war would be joined, and I might prove to people how unnecessary priests are.

"But they are more difficult to deal with than the English. A fat hypocrite like Jinendra's High Priest is like a carp to be caught with a worm, or an ass to be beaten with a stick; but there are others—true ascetics—lusting for influence more than a bellyful, caring nothing for the outside of the power if they hold the nut—nothing for the petals if they hold the seed. Those men are not easy. For the present I shall seem to play into their hands, but they know that I despise them."

SO GREAT preparations were made for a royal wedding. And when Samson heard that Yasmini was to be Utirupa's bride he was sufficiently disgusted to satisfy even Yasmini, who was no admirer of his. Sita Ram's account of Samson's rage as he explained the circumstance to Willoughby de Wing, was almost epic.

"—— the woman! And —— him! She's known for a troublemaker. Simla will be asking me why on earth I permitted it. They'll want to know why I didn't caution Utirupa and warn him against that princess in particular. She's going to parade through the streets under my very nose and in flat defiance of our Government, just at the very time when I've gone on record as sponsor for Utirupa.

"I've assured them he wouldn't do an ill-advised thing. And I specifically undertook to see that he married wisely. But it was too early yet to speak to him about it. And here he springs this offense on me! It's too bad—too bad!"

"You'll be all right with Simla," said Willoughby de Wing. "Dig up the Treasure and they'll recommend you for the K.C.B., with the pick of all the jobs going."

"They don't give K.C.B's to men in my trade," Samson answered rather gloomily. "They reserve them for you professional butchers."

He was feeling jumpy about the Treasure, and dreaming of it all night long in a way that did not make the waking fears more comfortable. A whole company of sappers had been sent for; and because of the need of secrecy for the present, a special appropriation had had to be made to cover the cost of lumber for the tunnel that Dick began, and that the sappers finished.

They had dug right up to the pipal-trees and half-killed them by tunneling under their roots along one side; but without discovering anything so far except a few old coins. The very ancient golden mohur in the glass case marked "Sialpore" in the

Allahabad Museum is one of them. Now the sappers were going to tunnel down the other side and kill the ancient trees completely.

Being a man of a certain courage, Samson had it in mind—perhaps—to send the map to an expert for an opinion on it. Only, he hated experts; they were so bent always on establishing their own pet theory. And it was late—a little late for expert opinions on the map.

The wisest way was to keep silent and continue digging, even if the operation did kill ancient landmarks that one could see from across the river, for instance.

And of course he could not refuse to recognize the wedding officially and put on record the name, ancestry and title of the maharaja's legal first wife. Nor could he keep away, because, with amazingly shrewd judgment, Yasmini had contrived the novelty of welding wedding and coronation ceremony and festival in one.

Instead of two successive outbursts of squandering there would be only one. It was economic progress. One could not withhold approval of it. He must go in person, smile, give a valuable present—paid for by the Government, of course—and say the proper thing.

One modicum of consolation did ooze out of the rind of Samson's situation. It would have been no easier, he reflected, to say the right thing at the right time at the coronation ceremony, especially to the right people if that Treasure should already have been dug up and reposing in the coffers of the Indian Government. After a certain sort of bargain one's tongue feels unpleasant in one's cheek.

Sialpore, however, was much more taken up with preparations for the colossal coronation-wedding feast than with Samson's digging. Yasmini went on her palace roof each day to see how the trees leaned this and that way, as the earth was mined from under them.

And Tom Tripe, standing guard on the bastion of the fort to oversee the removal of certain stores and fittings before the English should march out finally and the maharaja's men march in, could see the destruction of the pipal-trees too. So, for that matter, could Dick Blaine, on the day when he took some of the gang and blocked up the mouth of the mine on the hill with cemented masonry—to prevent theft; and cursed himself afterward for being such a fool as to brick up his luncheon basket inside the tunnel, to say nothing of all the men's water-bottles, and some of their food and tools. But nobody else in Sialpore took very much notice of Samson's excavation, and nobody cared about Dick's mine.

Every maharaja always tries to make his wedding and coronation ceremonies grander and more extravagant and memorable than anybody else's has been since history began; and there are plenty whose interest it is to encourage him, and to help him do it; money-lenders for instance. But Utirupa not only had two magnificent ceremonies to unite in one, but Yasmini to supply the genius. The preparations made the very priests gasp—and they were used to orgies of extravagance; taught and preached and profited by them in fact.

Once or twice Tess remonstrated, but Yasmini turned a scornfully deaf ear.

"What would you have us do instead? Invest all the money at eight per cent. so that the rich traders may have more capital and found an asylum where Bimbu, Umra and Pinga may live in idleness and be rebuked for mirth?"

"Bimbu, Umra and Pinga might be put to work," said Tess. "As for mirth, they laugh at such unseemly things. They could be taught what proper humor is."

"Have they not worked?" Yasmini asked. "Has one man got into your house, without you or the guard set to watch you knowing it? Could any one have done it better? Did it not have to be done?

"As for humor—have they not enjoyed the task? Has it not been a sweeter tale in their ears than the story-teller's at the corner, because they have told it to themselves and acted a part in it?"

"Well," said Tess, "you can't convince me. There are institutions that could be founded with all that money you and your husband are going to spend on ceremony, that would do good."

"Institutions?" Yasmini's eyes grew ablaze with blue, indignant fire. "There were institutions in this land before the English came, which need attention before we worry ourselves over new ones. Play was one of them, and I will revive it first. The people used to dance under the trees by moonlight. Do they do it now?

"It is true they used to die of famine in the bad years, growing much too fat in good ones, and the English have changed that. But I will give them back the gladness, if I can, that has been squeezed out by too many 'institutions.' "

"You would rather see Bimbu, Umra and Pinga happy than prosperous and well-clothed?"

"Which would you rather?" Yasmini asked her. "You shall see them well clothed in a little while. Just wait."

THERE were almost endless altercations with the priests. Utirupa himself was known to have profound Sikh tendencies—a form of liberalism in religion that produced almost as much persecution at one time as Protestantism did in Europe.

To marry a woman openly who had no true claim to caste at all—as Yasmini, being the daughter of a foreigner, had not—was in the eyes of the priests almost as great an offense as Yasmini's father's, who crossed the *kali pani* (ocean) and married abroad in defiance of them. So the priests demanded the most elaborate ritual of purification that ingenuity could devise, together with staggering sums of money.

Utirupa's eventual threat to lead a reform movement in Rajputana brought them to see reason, however, and they eventually compromised, with a stipulation that the public should not be told how much had been omitted.

There was feasting in the streets for a week before the great inauguration ceremony. Tables were set in every side street, where whoever cared to might eat his fill of fabulous free rations. Each night the streets were illuminated with colored lights, and fireworks blazed and roared against the velvet sky at intervals, dowering the ancient trees and temple-tops with momentary splendor.

All day long there were performances by acrobats, and songs, and story-telling wherever there was room for a crowd to gather. Fakirs as gruesome and fantastic as the side-shows at a Western fair flocked in to pose and be gaped at, receiving, besides free rations and tribute of small coin, gratification to their vanity in return for the edifying spectacle.

There were little processions, too, of princes arriving from a distance to be present on the great day, their elephants of state loaded with extravagant gifts, and their retainers vying with peacocks in efforts to look splendid, and be arrogant, and claim importance for their masters. Never a day but three or four or half a dozen noble guests arrived; and nobody worked except those who had to make things easy for the rest; and they worked overtime.

One accustomed spectacle, however, was omitted. Utirupa would have none of the fights between wild animals in the arena that had formed such a large part of Gungadhura's public amusement. But there was ram-fighting, and wrestling between men such as Sialpore had never seen, all the best wrestlers from distant parts being there to strive for prizes.

Hired dancers added to the gaiety at night, and each incoming nobleman brought nautch girls, or acrobats, or trained animals, or all three to add to the revelry. And there was cock-fighting and quail-fighting, of course, all day long and every day, with gambling in proportion.

When the day of days at last arrived the city seemed full of elephants. Every compound and available walled space had been requisitioned to accommodate the brutes, and there were sufficient argumentative mahouts, all insisting that their elephants had not enough to eat, and all selling at least half of the provided ration, to have formed a good-sized regiment.

The elephants' daily bath in the river was a sight worth crossing India to see. There was always the chance besides that somebody's horses would take fright and add excitement to the spectacle.

Up in the great palace Utirupa feasted and entertained his equals all day long, and most of the night. There was horse-racing that brought the crowd out in its thousands, and a certain amount of tent-pegging and polo, but most of the royal gala-making was hidden from public view.

Patali, for instance, reckless of Gungadhura's fall and looking for new fields to conquer, provided a nautch by herself and her own trained galaxy of girls that would not have done at all in public.

Yasmini kept close in her own palace. She too had her hands full with entertaining, for there were about a dozen of the wives of distant princes who had made the journey in state to attend the ceremony and watch it from behind the durbar grille—to say nothing of the wives of local magnates. But she herself kept within doors until the night before the night of full moon, the day before the ceremony.

That night she dressed as a *rangar* once more, and rode in company with Tess and Dick, with Ismail the Afridi running like a dog in the shadows behind them, to the fort on the hill that the English had promised to evacuate that night. They never changed the garrison in any case except by night, because of the heat and the long march for the men; and as near the full moon as possible was the customary date.

As they neared the fort they could see Tom Tripe, with his huge dog silhouetted on the bastion beside him, standing like Napoleon on the sea-shore keeping vigil. From that height he could oversee the blocked-up mouth of Dick's mine, and in the bright moonlight it would have been difficult for any one to approach either mine or fort without detection; for there was only one road, and Dick's track making a détour from it—both in full view.

HE CAUGHT sight of them, and Dick whistled, the dog answering with a cavernous howl of recognition. Tom disappeared from the bastion, and after about ten minutes turned up in the shadow where they waited.

"Come to watch the old march out and the new march in?" he asked. "I'll stand here with you, if I may. They're due."

"Is everything ready?" asked Yasmini.

"Yes, your ladyship. They've been ready for an hour, and fretful. There's a story gone the rounds that the fort is haunted, and if ever a garrison was glad to quit it's this one.

"Let's hope the incoming garrison don't get wind of it. A sepoy with the creeps ain't dependable. Hullo, here they come."

There came a sound of steady tramping up-hill, and a bugle somewhere up in the darkness announced that the out-going garrison had heard it and were standing to arms. Presently Utirupa rode into view, accompanied by half a dozen of his guests, and followed by a company from his own army, officered by Rajputs.

If he knew that Yasmini was watching from the shadow he made no sign, but rode straight on up-hill. The heavy breathing of his men sounded through the darkness like the whispering of giants, and their steady tramp was like a giant's footfall; for Tom Tripe had drilled them thoroughly, even if their weapons were nearly as old-fashioned as the fort to which they marched.

After an interminable interval there came another bugle-blast above them, and the departing garrison tramped within earshot.

"Now count them!" Yasmini whispered, and Tess wondered why.

They were marching down-hill as fast as they could swing—a detachment of Punjabi infantry under the command of a native *subhadar,* with two ammunition-mules and a cartful of their kits and personal belongings—all talking and laughing as if regret were the last thing in their minds.

"Ninety-seven," said Tess when the last had passed down-hill.

"Did you count the man beside the driver on the cart?"

"Yes."

"There was one sick man in a *dhoolie.* Did you count him?"

"No."

"Ninety-eight, then. Tom!"

"Your ladyship?"

"Weren't there some English officers?"

"Two. A captain and a subaltern. They left late this afternoon."

"Making?" said Yasmini.

"Exactly a hundred," answered Tess.

"Let us go now," said Yasmini. "We must be up at dawn for the great day. I shall expect you very early, remember.

"Tom! You may ride back with us. His Highness will mount the guard in person. You're to come to my palace. I've a present waiting for you."

It is better to celebrate the occasion than to annoy the gods with pretended virtue and too many promises.—*Eastern proverb.*

CHAPTER XXIII

Three amber moons in a purple sky.

THE day of the great inauguration ceremony dawned inauspiciously for somebody. For one thing, the blasting-powder laid ready by the sappers under the pipal-trees for explosion the day following blew up prematurely. Some idiot had left a kerosene lamp burning in the dugout probably, and a rat upset it; or some other of the million possibilities took place.

Nobody was killed, but a dozen pipal-trees were blown to smithereens, and the ghastly fact laid bare for all to see that in the irregular chasm that remained there was not a symptom of the Treasure—as Samson was immediately notified. So Samson had to attend the ceremony with that disconcerting knowledge up his sleeve.

But that was not all. The night signaler, going off duty, had brought him a telegram from the high commissioner to say that all available military bands were to be lent for the day to the maharaja, and that as many British officers as possible, of all ranks, were to take part in the procession to grace it with official sanctity.

That was especially aggravating because it had reached his ears that the Princess Yasmini intended to ride veiled in the procession, and to sit beside her husband in the durbar hall unveiled. He was therefore going to be obliged to recognize her more or less officially as consort of the reigning prince.

Simla did not realize that, of course; but it was too late to wire for different instructions. He had a grim foreboding that he himself would catch it later on when the facts leaked out, as they were bound to do.

It was babu Sita Ram who "caught it" first, though. Within two days Samson discovered that Sita Ram had been sending official telegrams in code on his own account, very cleverly designed to cause the high commissioner to give those last-minute instructions.

It was obvious that a keener wit than the babu's had inspired him; but though he was browbeaten for an hour he did not implicate Yasmini. And after he had been dismissed from the service with ignominy she engaged him as a sort of secretary, at the same pay.

But that was not all, either. The murderer of Mukhum Dass was refusing stolidly to plead guilty to another charge, and Blaine's butler had come out with the whole story of the burglary. Parliament would get to hear about it next, and then there would be the very deuce to pay.

The police were offering the murderer what they called "inducements and persuasion;" but he held out for "money down," and did not seem to find too unendurable whatever it was that happened to him at intervals in the dark cell. There are limits even to what an Indian policeman can do without making marks on a man or compelling the attention of European officers.

On top of all that Samson had to hand Dick Blaine a check amounting to a month's pay, look pleasant while he did it, and—above all—look pleasant at the coming durbar.

On the other hand, there were people who enjoyed themselves. Sialpore, across the river, was a dinning riot of excitement—flags, triumphal arches, gala clothes and laughter everywhere.

Dick Blaine, driving Tess toward Yasmini's palace in the very early dawn, had to drive slowly to avoid accident, for the streets were already crowded. His own place in the procession was to be on horseback pretty nearly anywhere he chose to insert himself behind the royal cortège, and, not being troubled on the score of precedence, he had Tom Tripe in mind as a good man to ride with. Tom could tell him things.

But he waited there for more than an hour until the royal elephants arrived, magnificent in silver howdahs and bright paint, and watched Tess emerge with Yasmini and the other women. Tess wore borrowed jewels, and a veil that you could see her face through; but Yasmini was draped from head to foot as if the eyes of masculinity had never rested on her, and never might.

Things were not going quite as smoothly as they ought, although Tom Tripe was galloping everywhere red-necked with energy; and it was nearly half an hour more before the escort of maharaja's troops came in brand-new scarlet uniforms, to march in front and behind and on each side of the elephants. So Dick got quite a chance to "josh" Tess, and made the most of it.

But things got under way at last. Dick's *sais* found him with the horse he was to ride, and the procession gathered first on the great *maidan* (open ground) between the city and the river, with bands in full blast, drums thundering to split the ears, masters of ceremony shouting, and the elephants enjoying themselves most of all, as they always do when they have a stately part to play in company.

UTIRUPA led the way in a golden howdah on Akbar, the biggest elephant in captivity and the very architype of sobriety ever since his escapade with Tom Tripe's rum. Akbar was painted all over with vermilion-and-blue decorations, and looked as if butter would not melt in his mouth.

Next after Utirupa the princes rode in

proper order of rank and precedence, each with two attendants up behind him waving fans of ostrich plumes. Then came a band.

Then Samson, and a score of British officers in carriages whose teams were nearly frantic from the din and the smell of elephants and had to have runners to hold their heads—all of which added exquisite amusement.

Then another band, and a column of the maharaja's troops. Then more elephants, loaded with the lesser notables; and after them a column nearly a mile long of Rajput gentry on the most magnificent horses they could discover and go in debt for.

After the Rajput gentry came a third band followed by more maharaja's troops, and then Yasmini on her elephant, followed by twenty princesses and Tess, each with a great beast to herself and at least two maids to wave the jeweled fans. Then more troops, followed by Dick and Tom Tripe together on horseback leading the rank and file.

Trotters jogged along between Tom and Dick, pausing at intervals to struggle with both forefeet to remove a collar bossed with solid gold that he regarded as an outrage to his dogly dignity.

And the rank and file were well worth looking at, for whoever could find a decent suit of clothes was marching, shouting, laughing, sweating, kicking up the dust, and having a good time generally. The water-sellers were garnering a harvest; fruit and sweetmeat pedlers were dreaming of open-fronted shops and how to defeat the tax-collector.

The police swaggered and yelled and ordered everybody this and that way; and nobody took the slightest notice; and the policemen did not dare do anything about it because the crowd was too unanimously bent on having its own way, and therefore dangerous to bully but harmless if not hit.

Half-way down the thronging stream of men on foot came another elephant—a little one, alone, carrying three gentlemen in fine white raiment—Bimbu and Pinga and Umra to wit, who, it is regrettable to chronicle, were very drunk indeed and laughed exceedingly at most unseemly jokes, exchanging jests with the crowd that would have made Tess' hair stand on end if she could have heard and understood them.

From windows and roofs that overhung the street people threw flowers at Bimbu, Pinga and Umra, because all Hindustan knows there is merit in treating beggars as if they were noblemen; and Bimbu wove himself a garland out of the buds to wear on his turban, which made him look more bacchanalian than ever.

In and out and around and through the ancient city the procession filed, passing now and then through streets so narrow that people could have struck Utirupa through the upper-story windows; but all they threw at him was flowers, calling him *Bahadur*, and king of elephants, and great prince, and dozens of other names that never hurt anybody with a sense of pageantry and humor.

He acted the part for them just as they wanted him to, sitting bolt upright in the howdah like a prince in a fairy-story, with a jeweled aigret in his turban and more enormous diamonds flashing on his silken clothes than a courtezan would wear at Monte Carlo. And all the other princes were likewise in degree, only that they rode rather smaller elephants, Akbar having no peer when he was sober and behaved himself.

And when Yasmini passed, and Tess and all the other princesses, there was such excitement as surely had never been before; for if you looked carefully, with a hand held to keep the sun from your eyes, you could actually see the outlines of their faces through the veils.

And such loveliness! Such splendor! Such pride! Such jewels! Above all, such fathomless mystery and suggestion of intrigue! Pageantry is expensive, but—believe Sialpore—it is worth the price.

And then in front of the durbar hall in the dinning, throbbing heat all the animals and carriages and men got mixed in a milling vortex while the notables went into the hall to be jealous of each other's better places and left the crowd outside to sort itself.

And everything was made much more interesting by the fact that Akbar was showing signs of ill-temper, throwing up his great trunk once or twice to trumpet dissatisfaction. His mahout was calling him endearing names and using the ankus alternately, promising him rum with one breath and a thrashing with the next. But Akbar wanted alcohol, not promises, and none dared give him any before evening, when he might get as drunk as he wished in a stone-walled compound all to himself.

Then Samson's horses took fright at Akbar's trumpeting, he getting out of the carriage at the durbar door only in the nick of time. The horses bolted into the crowd, and an indignant elephant smashed the carriage; but nobody was hurt beyond a bruise or two, although they passed word down the thunderous line that a hundred and six-and-thirty had been crushed to death and one child injured, which made it much more thrilling, and the sensation was just as actual as if the deaths had really happened.

AND inside the durbar hall there was surely never such a splendid scene in history—such a sea of turbans—such glittering of jewels—such a peacocking and swaggering and proud bearing of ancient names. Utirupa sat on the throne in front of a peacock-feather decoration; and—marvel of marvels!—Yasmini sat on another throne beside him, unveiled, with a genuine unveiled and very beautiful princess beside her, who nobody except Samson suspected might be Tess. She wore almost as many jewels as the queen herself, and looked almost as ravishing.

But the Princess Yasmini's eyes—they were the glory of that occasion! Her spun-gold hair was marveled at, but her eyes—surely they were lent her by a god for the event! They were bluer than the water of Himalayan lakes; bluer than turquoise, sapphire, the sky, or any other blue thing you can think of—laughing blue—loving, understanding, likable, amusing blue—two jewels that outshone all the other jewels in the durbar hall that day.

And as each prince filed past Utirupa in proper order of precedence, to make a polite set speech, and bow, and be bowed to in return, he had to pass Yasmini first, and bow to her first, although he made his speech to Utirupa, who acknowledged it. So when Samson's turn came he too had to bow first to Yasmini, because as a gentleman he could hardly do less; and her wonderful eyes laughed into his angry ones as she bowed to him in return with such good humor and elation that he could not help but smile back; he could forgive a lovely woman almost anything, could Samson.

He could almost forgive her that no less than nineteen British officers of various ranks, as well as one hundred and three-and-twenty native noblemen, had seen him with their own eyes making an official bow to the consort of a reigning maharaja. He had recognized her officially.

Well; he supposed he could eat his aftermath as well as any man; and he drove home with a smile and a high chin, to unbosom himself to Colonel Willoughby de Wing over a whisky and soda at the club, as Ferdinand de Sousa Braganza reported in some detail at the Goanese club afterward.

Late that night when the fireworks were all over and the lights were beginning to be extinguished on the roofs and windows it was a question which was most drunk—Akbar, the three beggars or Tom Tripe. Akbar's outrageous trumpeting could be heard all over the city as he raced around his dark compound after shadows and rats and mice and anything else that he imagined or could see.

What Tom Tripe saw kept him to his quarters, where Trotters watched him in dire misery.

The three beggars, Bimbu, Pinga and Umra, saw three amber moons in a purple sky, for they said so. They also said that all the world was lovely, and Yasmini was a queen of queens, out of whose jeweled hand the very gods ate. And when people scolded them for blasphemy, they made such outrageously funny and improper jokes that everybody laughed again.

Drunk or sober—and more than ninety-nine per cent. of Sialpore was absolutely sober then as always—every one had something to amuse and entertain, except Samson, whose mental vision was of a great empty hole in the ground in which he might just as well bury all his hopes of ever being high commissioner; and poor Tom Tripe, who had worked harder than anybody, and was now enjoying the aftermath perhaps least.

Sialpore put itself to bed in great good temper, sure that princes and elephants and ceremony were the cream of life, and that whoever did not think so did not deserve to have any pageantry and pomp, and that was all about it.

Next morning early Dick Blaine drove down to look for Tom Tripe—found him—bound him in a blanket—shoved him, feet first, on to the floor of the dog-cart, and drove him, followed by Trotters in doubt whether to show approval or fight, to his own house on the hill, where Tess and he nursed the old soldier back to soberness and old remorse.

By that time Bimbu and Pinga and Umra were back again at the garden gate, sitting in the dust in ancient rags and whining "*Bhig mangi, saheebi!*"—"Alms, heavenborn, alms!"

> "You are a fool," said the crow.
> "Am I?" the hen answered.
> "Certainly you are a fool. You sit in a dark corner hatching eggs, when there are live chickens for the asking over yonder."
> So the hen left her nest in search of ready-made chickens, and the crow made a square meal.—*Eastern proverb.*

CHAPTER XXIV

A hundred guarded it.

IT BEGAN to be rumored presently that Utirupa had declined to recognize Blaine's contract with his predecessor. Samson's guarded hints and the fact that the mouth of the mine remained blocked with concrete masonry were more or less corroborative. But the Blaines did not go, although Dick put in no appearance at the club.

Then Patali, who was sedulously cultivating Yasmini's patronage, with ulterior designs on Utirupa that were not misunderstood, told Norwood's wife's *ayah's* sister's husband that the American had secured another contract; and the news, of course, reached Samson's ears at once.

So Samson called on Utirupa and requested explanations. He was told that the mining-contract had not received a moment's consideration, and, with equal truth, that the American, being an expert in such matters and on the spot, had been asked to undertake examination of the fort's foundations. The new maharanee, it seemed, had a fancy to build a palace where the fort stood, and the matter was receiving shrewd investigation and estimate in advance.

Samson could not object to that. Those foundations had not been examined carefully for eight hundred years. A perfectly good palace had been wrested away by diplomatic means on Samson's own initiative, and there was no logical reason why the maharaja should not build another one to replace it. The fort had no modern military value.

"I hope you're not going to try to pay for your new palace out of taxes?" Samson asked bluntly.

But Utirupa smiled. He hoped nothing of that kind would be necessary.

Samson could not go and investigate what Blaine was doing, because he was given plainly to understand that the new palace was the maharanee's business; and one does not intrude uninvited into the affairs of ladies in the East. The efforts of quite a number of spies, too, were unavailing.

So Dick had his days pretty much to himself except when Tess brought his lunch to him or Yasmini herself in boots and turban rode up for a few minutes to look on. The guards on the bastions and in the great keep in the center knew nothing whatever of what was happening, because all Dick's activity was underground and Tom Tripe, with that ferocious dog of his, kept guard over the ancient door that led to the lower passages.

Dick used to return home every evening tired out, but Tom Tripe, keeping strictly sober, slept in the fort and said nothing of importance to any one. He looked drawn and nervous, as if something had terrified him; but public opinion ascribed that to the "snakes" on the night of the coronation.

Then about sundown one evening Tom Tripe galloped in a great hurry to Utirupa's palace. That was nothing to excite comment, because in his official capacity he was always supposed to be galloping all over the place on some errand or another.

But after dark Utirupa and Yasmini rode out of the palace unattended, which did cause comment, Yasmini in man's clothes, as usual when she went on some adventure. It was not seen which road they took, which was fortunate in the circumstances.

Tess was up at the fort before them, waiting with Dick outside the locked door leading to the ancient passages below. They said nothing beyond the most perfunctory greetings, but, each taking a kerosene lantern, passed through the door in single file, Tom leading, and locked the door after them. That was all that the fort guards ever knew about what happened.

"I've not been in," said Dick's voice from behind them. "All I've done is force an entrance."

From in front Tom Tripe took up the burden

"And I wouldn't have liked your job, sir. It was bad enough to sit and guard the door. After you'd gone o' nights I'd sit for hours with my hair on end, listening; and the dog 'ud growl beside me as if he saw ghosts."

"Maybe it was snakes," Yasmini answered. "They will flee from the lantern-light."

"No, your ladyship. I'm not afraid of snakes—except them Scotch-plaid ones that come o' brandy on top o' royal durbars. This was the sound o' some one digging—digging all night long down in the bowels of the earth. Look out!"

They all jumped, but it proved to be only Tom's own shadow that had frightened him. His nerves were all to pieces, and Dick Blaine took the lead. The dog was growling intermittently and keeping close to Tom's heels.

They passed down a long spiral flight of stone steps into a sort of cavern that had been used for an ammunition-room. The departing British troops had left a dozen ancient cannon-balls, not all of which were in one place. The smooth flags of the floor were broken, and at the far end one very heavy stone was lifted and laid back, disclosing a dark hole.

"I used the cannon-balls," said Dick, "to drop on the stones and listen for a hollow noise. Once I found that the game was simple."

LEADING down into the dark hole were twelve more steps, descending straight, but turning sharply at the bottom. Dick led the way.

"The next sight's gruesome," he announced, his voice booming hollow among the shadows.

The passage turned into a lofty chamber in the rock, whose walls once had all been lined with dressed stone, though some of the lining had fallen. In the shadows at one end an image of Jinendra smiled complacently, and there were some ancient brass lamps hanging on chains from arches cut into the rock on every side.

"This is the grue," said Dick, holding his lantern high.

Its light fell on a circle of skeletons, all perfect, each with its head toward a brass bowl in the center.

"Ugh!" growled Tom Tripe. "Those are the ghosts that dig o' nights. Go smell 'em, Trotters. Are they the enemy?"

The dog sniffed the bones, but slunk away again uninterested.

"Nothing doing!" laughed Dick. "You haven't laid the ghost yet, Tom."

"Have you got your pistols with you?" Tom retorted, patting his own jacket to show the bulge of one beneath it.

"Those," said Yasmini, standing between the skeletons and holding up her own light, "are the bones of priests, who died when the secret of the place was taken from them! My father told me they were left to starve to death. This was Jinendra's Temple."

"D'you suppose they pulled that cut stone from the walls, trying to force a way out?" Dick hazarded. "The lid of the hole we came down through is a foot thick, and was set solid in cement; they couldn't have lifted that if they tried for a week. Everything's solid in this place. I sounded every inch of the floor with a cannon-ball, but it's all solid underneath."

"I would have gone straight to the image of Jinendra," said Yasmini. "Jinendra smiles and keeps his secrets so well that I should have suspected him at once."

"I went to that last," Dick answered. "It looks so like a piece of high relief carved out of the rock wall. As a matter of fact, though, it's about six tons of quartz with a vein of gold in it—see the gold running straight up the line of the nose and over the middle of the head?

"I pried it away from the wall at last with steel wedges, and there's just room to squeeze in behind it. Beyond that is another wall that I had to cut through with a chisel. Who goes in first?"

"'Who looks for gold finds gold!'" Yasmini quoted. "The vein of gold you have been mining was the clue to the secret all along."

She would have led the way, but Utirupa stopped her.

"If there is danger," he said, "it is my place to lead."

But nobody would permit that, Yasmini least of all.

"Shall Samson choose a new maharaja so soon as all that?" she laughed.

"Let the dog go first!" Tom proposed.

Trotters was sniffing at the dark gap behind Jinendra's image, with eyes glaring and a low, rumbling growl issuing from between bared teeth. But Trotters would not go.

Finally, in the teeth of remonstrances from Tess, Dick cocked a pistol and, with his lantern in the other hand, strode in boldly. Trotters followed him, and Tom Tripe next. Then Utirupa. Then the women.

Nothing happened. The passage was about ten feet long and a yard wide. They squeezed one at a time through the narrow break Dick had made in the end of it, into a high pitch-dark cave that smelled unexplainably of wood-smoke, Dick standing just inside the gap to hold the lantern for them and help them through—continuing to stand there after Tess had entered last.

"Jee-rusalem!" he exclaimed. "This is where I lose out."

The first glance was enough to show that they stood in the secret treasure-vault of Sialpore. There were ancient gold coins in heaps on the floor where they had burst by their own weight out of long-demolished bags—countless coins; and drums and bags and boxes more of them behind. But what made Dick exclaim was the bars of silver stacked at the rear and along one side in rows as high as a man.

"My contract reads gold," he said. "A percentage of all gold. There's not a word in it of silver. Who'd ever have thought of finding silver, anyhow, in this old mountain?"

"Your percentage of the gold will make you rich," said Utirupa. "But you shall take silver too. Without you we might have found nothing for years to come."

"A contract's a contract," Dick answered. "I drew it myself, and it stands."

"Look out!" yelled Tom Tripe suddenly. But the warning came too late.

OUT of the shadow behind a stack of silver bars rushed a man with a long dagger, stabbing frantically at Dick, Tom's great barking army revolver missed, filling the chamber with noise and smoke, for he used black powder.

Down went Dick under his assailant, and the dagger rose and fell in spasmodic jerks. Dick had hold of the man's wrist, but the dagger-point dripped blood and the fury of the attack increased as Dick appeared to weaken.

Utirupa ran in to drag the assailant off, but Trotters got there first—chose his neck-hold like a wolf in battle—and in another second Dick was free, with Tess kneeling beside him while a life-and-death fight between animal and man raged between the bars of silver.

"Gungadhura!" Yasmini shouted, waving her lantern for a sight of the struggling man's face.

He was lashing out savagely with the long knife, but the dog had him by the neck from behind, and he only inflicted surface wounds.

"——'s bells! He'll kill my dog!" roared Tom. "Hi, Trotters! Here, you—Trotters!"

But the dog took that for a call to do his thinking, and let go for a better hold. His long fangs closed again on his victim's jugular, and tore it out. The long knife clattered on the stone floor, and then Tom got his dog by the jaws and hauled him off.

"You can't blame the dog," he grumbled. "He knew the smell of him. He'd been told to kill him if he got the chance."

"Gungadhura!" said Yasmini again, holding her lantern over the dying man. "So Gungadhura was Tom Tripe's ghost. What a pity that the dog should kill him when all he wanted was a battle to the death with me. I would have given him his fight."

Dick was in no bad way. He had three flesh wounds on his right side, and none of them serious. Tess stanched them with torn linen, and she and Tom Tripe propped him against some bags of bullion, while Utirupa threw his cloak over Gungadhura's dead body.

"How did Gungadhura get in here?" wondered Tess.

"Through the hole at the end of the mine-shaft, I suppose," said Dick. "I built up the lower one—he came one day and saw me doing it—but left a space at the top that looked too small for a man to crawl through. Then I blocked the mouth of the tunnel afterward, and shut him in, I suppose. He's had the men's rice and water-bottles, and they left a lot of fagots in the tunnel, too, I remember. That accounts for the smell of smoke."

"But what was the digging I've heard o' nights?" demanded Tom. "I'm not the only one. The British garrison was scared out of its wits."

Utirupa was hunting about with a lantern in his hand, watching the dog go sniffing in the shadows.

"Come and see what he has done!" he called suddenly, and Yasmini ran to his side.

In a corner of the vault one of the great facing stones had been removed, disclosing a deep fissure in the rock. One of Dick Blaine's crowbars that he had left in the tunnel lay beside it.

"He must have found that by tapping," said Tom Tripe.

"Yes, but look why he wanted it!" Yasmini answered. "Tom, could you be as malicious as that?"

"As what, your ladyship?"

"See, he has poured gold into the fissure, hoping to close it up again so that nobody could find it!"

"But why didn't he work his way out with the crowbar?" Dick objected from his perch between the bags of bullion.

"What was his life worth to him outside?" Yasmini asked. "Samson knew who murdered Mukhum Dass. He would have been a prisoner for the rest of his life to all intents and purposes.

"No. He preferred to hide the Treasure again and then wait here for me, suspecting that I knew where it is and would come for it. Only we came too soon, before he had it hidden."

But it was Patali afterward, between boasting and confession, who explained that Dick was Gungadhura's real objective after all. He preferred vengeance on the American even to a settled account with Yasmini. He must have found the Treasure by accident after crawling into the unsealed crack in the wall to wait there against Dick's coming.

"The money must stay here, and be removed little by little," said Utirupa.

"First of all Blaine *sahib's* share of it!" Yasmini added. "Who shall count it? Who!"

"Never mind the money now," Tess answered. "Dick's alive! When did you first know you'd found the Treasure, Dick?"

"Not until the day that Gungadhura found me closing up the vault, and asked me to dig at the other place. The princess told me I was on the trail of it that night that you went with her by camel; but I didn't know I'd found it till the day that Gungadhura came."

"How did *you* know where it was?" Tess asked, and Yasmini laughed.

"A hundred guarded it. I looked for a hundred pipal-trees, and found them—near the River Palace. But they were not changed once a month.

"I looked from there, and saw another hundred pipal-trees—here, below this fort—exactly a hundred. But neither were they changed once a month.

"Then I counted the garrison of the fort—exactly a hundred, all told. Then I knew. Then I remembered that 'who looks for gold finds gold,' and saw your husband digging for it. It seemed to me that the vein of gold he was following should lead to the Treasure, so I pulled strings until Samson blundered, trying to trick us.

"And now we have the Treasure, and the English do not know. And I am maharanee, as they do know, and shall know still better before I have finished.

"But what are we to do with Gungadhura's body? It shall not lie here to rot; it must have decent burial."

VERY late that night Tom Tripe moved the guards about on the bastions, contriving that the road below should not be overlooked by any one. The moon had gone down, so that it was difficult to see ten paces. He produced an *ekka* from somewhere—one of those two-wheeled carts drawn by one of those insignificant ponies that do most of the unpretentious work of India; and he and Ismail, the Afridi gateman, drove off into the darkness with a covered load.

Early next morning Gungadhura's body was found in the great hole that Samson's men had blasted in the River Palace grounds and it was supposed that a jackal had mangled his body after death.

That was what gave rise to the story that the English got the Treasure after all, and that Gungadhura, enraged and mortified at finding it gone, had committed suicide in the great hole it was taken from. They call the great dead pipal-tree that is the only one left now of the hundred, Gungadhura's gibbet; and there is quite a number, even of English people, who believe that the Indian Government got the money.

But I say no, because Yasmini told me otherwise. And if it were true that the English really got the money, what did they do with it, and why was Samson removed shortly afterward to a much less desirable post? Any one could see how Utirupa prospered, and he never raised the taxes half a mill.

Samson had his very shrewd suspicions, one of which was that that —— American with his smart little wife had scored off him in some way. But he went to his new post, at about the same time that the Blaines left for other parts, with some of the sting removed from his hurt feelings For he took Blaine's rifle with him—a good one—and the horse and dog-cart, and a riding-pony—more than a liberal return for payment of a three-thousand-rupee bet.

Pretty decent of Blaine on the whole, he thought. No fuss. No argument. Simply a short note of farewell, and a request that he would "find the horses a home and a use for the other things." Not bad. Not a bad fellow after all.

L'ENVOI

DOWN rings the curtain on a tale of love and mystery,
Clash of guile and anger and the consequence it bore;
The adventurers and kings
Disappear into the wings.
The puppet play is over and the pieces go in store.

Back, get ye back again to shop and ship and factory,
Mine and mill and foundry where the iron yokes are made;
Ye have trod a distant track
With a queen on camel-back,
Now hie and hew a Broadway for your emperors of trade!

Go, get ye gone again to streets of strife reechoing—
Clangor of the crossings where the tides of trouble meet;
Ye have heard the jackals cry
Beneath a jeweled sky,
But the Great White Way awaits you where the Klaxon-horns repeat.

Back, bend the back again to commonplace and drudgery,
Beat the shares of vision into swords of dull routine;
Take the trolley and the train
To suburban hives again,
For ye wake in little runnels where the floods of thought have been.

Speed, noise, efficiency! Have flights of fancy rested you?
A while we set time's finger back, and was the labor vain?
If so we whiled your leisure
And the puppets gave you pleasure,
Then say the word, good people, and we'll set the stage again.

CHAPTER XXV

And that is the whole story.

SMOKING a cigaret lazily on Utirupa's palace roof, Yasmini reached for Tess' hand.

"Come nearer. See—take this. It is the value, and more, of the percentage of the silver that your husband would not take."

She clasped a diamond necklace around Tess' neck, and watched it gleam and sparkle in the refracted sunlight.

"Don't you love it? Aren't they perfect? And now—you've a great big draft of money, so I suppose you're both off to America, and good-by to me forever?"

"For a long time."

"But why such a long time? You must come again soon. Come next year. You and I love each other. You teach me things I did not know, and you never irritate me. I love you. You must come back next year."

Tess shook her head.

"But why?"

"They say the climate isn't good for them until they're eighteen at least—some say twenty."

"Oh! Oh, I envy you! What will you call him? It will be a boy—it is sure to be a boy!"

"Richard will be one name, after my husband."

"And the other? You must name him after me in some way. You can not call a boy Yasmini. Would Utirupa sound too strange in America?"

"Rupert would sound better."

"Good! He shall be Rupert, and I will send a gift to him."

That accounts for the initials R. R. B. on a certain young man's trunk at Yale, and for the imported pedigree horse he rides during vacation—the third one, by the way, of a succession he has received from India.

AND that is the whole story, as Yasmini told it to me in the wonderful old palace at Buhl years afterward, when Utirupa was dead and the English Government had sent her into forced seclusion for a while—to repent of her manifold political sins as they thought—and to start new enterprises as it happened.

She never saw Theresa Blaine again, she told me, although they always corresponded; and she assured me over and over again, calling the painted figures of the old gods on the walls to witness, that but for Theresa Blaine's companionship and affection at the right moment, she would never have had the courage to do what she did, even though the Guns of the Gods were there to help her.

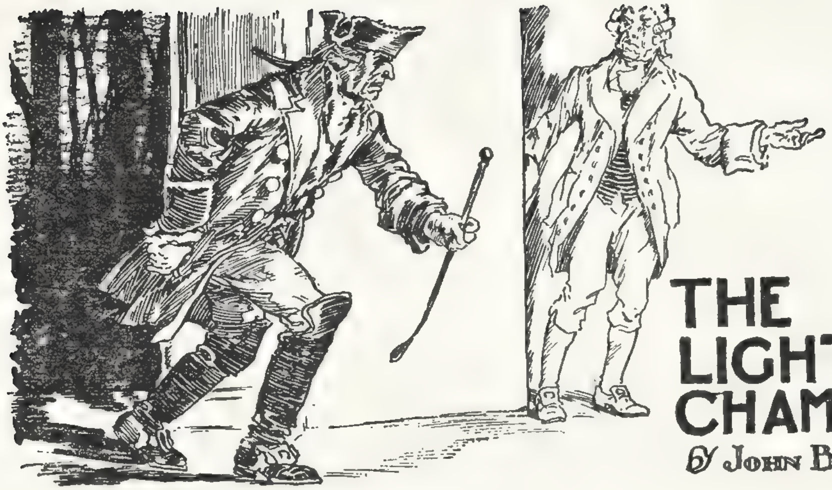
THE END

OH, WHEN WE GET TO HEAVEN

by T. M. Morrow

OH, WHEN we get to heaven beside the crystal sea,
Come, tell me, parson, answer this for me.
Won't there be nothin' else to do than twiddle a harp-string
Or set down in a golden chair to hear the angels sing?
No piles to drive; no concrete poured;
No smoky tunnels to be bored;
No rock to shoot up to the sky;
No cofferdams to keep things dry;
No gin poles rigged; no scaffolds raised;
No fancy brickwork to be praised;
No steel work its right place to give;
No red-hot rivets to be driv'?
Won't there be buildin' done at all beside the crystal sea?
Come, tell me, parson, answer this for me.

For what's the use of buildin' men where everything's complete?
Come, tell me, parson, answer this for me.
Will all them gates of pearl be hung and plumb and swingin' right?
Will all them streets of gold be paved with sewers out of sight?
When everybody, big and small,
Drops in their checks for good and all,
Will everything just pass away
That went to make a workin'-day?
Me, that's built plumb and square and true
A whole long life of livin' through,
If, when I get beyond the sun,
There ain't no buildin' to be done—
Why, what's the use of dyin' till the whole job here's complete?
Come, tell me, parson, answer this for me.



THE LIGHTED CHAMBER

By John Buchan

Author of "Prester John," etc.

The Eleventh Tale in the Series, "The Path of a King." Each Story Entirely Complete in Itself.

The Story behind the Stories

SO THAT the general idea of this series of stories may be more visible in each issue, two of them each time appear together. For in the stories themselves there is practically nothing concrete to indicate any connection between one of them and any of the others. Each story stands entirely on its own feet, complete in itself and differing from all the others in place and time and plot. Yet through them all runs a Path—a Path of a thousand years—"The Path of a King."

As expressed in the author's foreword to the series, it is not for nothing that a great man leaves posterity. The spark once transmitted may smolder for generations under ashes, but at the appointed time it will flare up to warm the world. God never allows waste. Yet we fools rub our eyes and wonder when we see genius come out of the gutter. We none of us know our ancestors beyond a little way. We all of us may have king's blood in our veins. The dago who blacked your boots may be descended by curious byways from Julius Cæsar.

"I saw the younger sons carry the royal blood far down among the people, down even into the kennels of the outcast. Generations follow, but there is that in the stock which is fated to endure. The sons and daughters blunder and sin and perish, but the race goes on, for there is a fierce stuff of life in it. Some rags of greatness always cling to it, and somehow the blood drawn from kings it never knew will be royal again. After long years, unheralded and unlooked for, there comes the day of the Appointed Time."

You will note that practically the only surface suggestion of any kind of connection between one story and any of the others is that the king's ring of the old Norse viking, introduced in the first story, is more or less casually mentioned in following stories and of course is always in possession of some one descended from that king, though the king himself has long since faded from human memory.

HE WAS hoisted on his horse by a hostler and two local sots from the tap-room; his valise was strapped none too securely before him, and with a farewell which was meant to be gracious but was only foolish, he tittuped into the rain. He was as drunk as an owl, though he did not know it.

All afternoon he had been mixing strong Cumberland ale with the brandy he had got from the Solway free-traders, and by five o'clock had reached that state when he saw the world all gilt and rosy and himself as an applauded actor on a splendid stage.

He had talked grandly to his fellow topers and opened to their rustic wits a glimpse of the great world. They had bowed to a master, even these slow Cumbrians who admired little but fat cattle and blooded horses. He had made a sensation, had seen wonder and respect in dull eyes, and tasted for a moment that esteem which he had failed to find elsewhere.

But he had been prudent. The Mr.

Gilbert Craster who had been traveling on secret business in Nithsdale and the Ayrshire moorlands had not been revealed in the change house of Nerbigging. There he had passed by the name, long since disused, of Gabriel Lovel, which happened to be his true one.

It was a needed precaution, for the times were crooked. Even in a Border hamlet the name of Craster might be known, and, since for the present it had a Whig complexion, it was well to go warily in a place where feeling ran high and at an hour when the Jacobites were on the march. But that other name of Lovel was buried deep in the forgotten scandal of London by-streets.

The gentleman, late rechristened Lovel, had for the moment no grudge against life. He was in the pay of a great man, no less than the Lord Duke of Marlborough, and he considered that he was earning his wages. A soldier of fortune, he accepted the hire of the best paymaster; only he sold not a sword but wits.

A pedant might have called it honor, but Mr. Lovel was no pedant. He had served a dozen chiefs on different sides. For Bolingbroke he had scoured France and twice imperiled his life in Highland bogs. For Somers he had traveled to Spain and for Wharton had passed unquiet months on the Welsh marches.

After his fashion he was an honest servant and reported the truth so far as his ingenuity could discern it. But once quit of a great man's service, he sold his knowledge readily to an opponent and had been like to be out of employment, since unless his masters gave him an engagement for life, he was certain some day to carry the goods they had paid for to their rivals. But Marlborough had seen his uses, for the great duke sat loose to parties and earnestly desired to know facts. So for Marlborough he went into the conclaves of both Whig and Jacobite, making his complexion suit his company.

He was new-come from the Scottish southwest, for the duke was eager to know if the malcontent moorland Whigs were about to fling their blue bonnets for King James. A mission of such discomfort Mr. Lovel had never known, not even when he was a go-between for Ormonde in the Irish bogs.

He had posed as an emissary from the Dutch brethren, son of an exiled Brownist, and for the first time in his life had found his regicide great-grandfather useful. The jargon of the godly fell smoothly from his tongue, and with its aid and that of certain secret letters he had found his way to the heart of the sectaries. He had sat through weary sermons in Cameronian sheilings and been present at the childish parades of the Hebronite remnant.

There was nothing to be feared in that quarter, for to them all in authority were idolaters and George no worse than James. In these moorland sojournings, too, he had got light on other matters, for he had the numbers of Kenmure's levies in his head, had visited my lord Stair at his grim Galloway castle and had had a long midnight colloquy with Roxburghe on Tweedside.

He had a pretty tale for his master, once he could get to him. But with Northumberland up and the Highlanders at Jedburgh and Kenmure coming from the west, it had been a ticklish business to cross the Border. Yet by cunning and a good horse it had been accomplished, and he found himself in Cumberland with the road open southward through the safe Lowther country. Wherefore Mr. Lovel had relaxed and taken his ease in an inn.

He would not have admitted that he was drunk, but he presently confessed that he was not clear about his road. He had meant to lie at Brampton and had been advised at the tavern of a short cut, a moorland bridle-path. Who had told him of it? The landlord, he thought, or the merry fellow in brown who had stood brandy to the company. Anyhow it was to save him five miles, and that was something in this accursed weather.

THE path was clear—he could see it squelching below him, pale in the last wet daylight—but where the —— did it lead? Into the heart of a moss, it seemed, and yet Brampton lay out of the moors in the tilled valley.

At first the fumes in his head raised him above the uncertainty of his road and the eternal downpour. His mind was far away in a select world of his own imagining. He saw himself in a privy chamber, to which he had been conducted by reverent lackeys, the door closed, the lamp lighted and the duke's masterful eyes bright with expectation. He saw the fine thin lips like a woman's primmed in satisfaction. He heard words of compliment—"none so swift and certain as you"—"in truth, a master hand"—"I know not where to look for your like."

Delicious speeches seemed to soothe his ear. And gold, too; bags of it, the tale of which would never appear in any account-book. Nay, his fancy soared higher. He saw himself presented to ministers as one of the country's saviors and kissing the hand of majesty.

What majesty and what ministers he knew not and did not greatly care—that was not his business. The rotundity of the Hanoverian and the lean darkness of the Stuart were one to him. Both could reward an adroit servant.

His vanity, terribly starved and cribbed in his normal existence, now blossomed like a flower. His muddled head was fairly ravished with delectable pictures. He seemed to be set at a great height above mundane troubles and to look down on men like a benignant god. His soul glowed with a happy warmth.

But somewhere he was devilish cold. His wretched body was beginning to cry out with discomfort. A loop of his hat was broken and the loose flap was a conduit for the rain down his back. His old riding-coat was like a dish-clout; and he felt icy about the middle. Separate streams of water entered the tops of his riding-boots—they were a borrowed pair and too big for him—and his feet were in puddles. It was only by degrees that he realized this misery.

Then in the boggy track his horse began to stumble. The fourth or fifth peck woke irritation, and he jerked savagely at his bridle and struck the beast's dripping flanks with his whip. The result was a jib and a flounder, and the shock squeezed out the water from his garments as from a sponge. Mr. Lovel descended from the heights of fancy to prosaic fact and cursed.

The dregs of strong drink were still in him, and so soon as exhilaration ebbed, they gave edge to his natural fears. He perceived that it had grown very dark and lonely. The rain, falling sheer, seemed to shut him into a queer Wintry world. All around the land echoed with the steady drum of it and the rumor of swollen runnels.

A wild bird wailed out of the mist and startled Mr. Lovel like a ghost. He heard the sound of men talking and drew rein; it was only a larger burn foaming by the wayside. The sky was black above him, yet a faint gray light seemed to linger, for water glimmered and he passed what seemed to be the edge of a loch. At another time the London-bred citizen would have been only peevish, for Heaven knew he had faced ill weather before in ill places. But the fiery stuff he had swallowed had woke a feverish fancy. Exaltation suddenly changed to foreboding.

He halted and listened. Nothing but the noise of the weather and the night dark around him like a shell. For a moment he fancied he caught the sound of horses, but it was not repeated. Where did this accursed track mean to lead him? Long ago he should have been in the valley and nearing Brampton. He was as wet as if he had wallowed in a pool, cold, and very weary.

A sudden disgust at his condition drove away his fears, and he swore lustily at Fortune. He longed for the warmth and the smells of his favorite haunts—Gilpin's with oysters frizzling in a dozen pans and noble odors stealing from the tap-room, the Green Man with its tripe-suppers, Wanless' Coffee-House, noted for its cuts of beef and its white puddings.

He would give much to be in a chair by one of those hearths and in the thick of that blowsy fragrance. Now his nostrils were filled with rain and bog-water and a sodden world. It smelt sour, like stale beer in a moldy cellar. And cold! He crushed down his hat on his head and precipitated a new deluge.

A bird shirled again in his ear, and his fright returned. He felt small and alone in a vast inhospitable universe. And mingled with it all was self-pity, for drink had made him maudlin. He wanted so little—only a modest comfort, a little ease. He had forgotten that half an hour before he had been figuring in princes' cabinets. He would give up this business and be quit of danger and the highroad. The duke must give him a reasonable reward, and with it he and his child might dwell happily in some country place.

He remembered a cottage at Guildford all hung with roses. But the duke was reputed a miserly patron, and at the thought Mr. Lovel's eyes overflowed. There was that —— bird again, wailing like a lost soul. The eeriness of it struck a chill to his heart, so that if he had been able to think of any refuge, he would have set spurs to his horse and galloped for it in blind terror.

He was in the mood in which men compose poetry, for he felt himself a midget in the grip of immensities. He knew no poetry, save a few tavern-songs; but in his youth he had had the Scriptures drubbed into him. He remembered ill-omened texts—one especially about wandering through dry places seeking rest. Would to Heaven he were in a dry place now!

The horse sprang backward and nearly threw him. It had blundered against the stone pillar of a gateway.

* * *

IT WAS now clear even to Mr. Lovel's confused wits that he was lost. This might be the road to Tophet, but it was no road to Brampton. He felt with numbed hands the face of the gate-posts. Here was an entrance to some dwelling, and it stood open. The path led through it, and if he left the path, he would without doubt perish in a bog-hole.

In his desolation he longed for a human face. He might find a good fellow who would house him; at the worst he would get direction about the road. So he passed the gateway and entered an avenue.

It ran between trees which took the force of the downpour, so that it seemed a very sanctuary after the open moor. His spirits lightened. The infernal birds had stopped crying, but again he heard the thud of hoofs. That was right and proved the place was tenanted. Presently he turned a corner and faced a light which shone through the wet, rayed like a heraldic star.

The sight gave him confidence, for it brought him back to a familiar world. He rode straight for it, crossing a patch of rough turf, where a fallen log all but brought him down. As he neared it, the light grew till he saw its cause. He stood before the main door of a house, and it was wide open. A great lantern, hung from a beam just inside, showed a doorway of some size and magnificence. And below it stood a servant, an old man, who at the sight of the stranger advanced to hold his stirrup.

"Welcome, my lord," said the man. "All is ready for you."

The last hour had partially sobered the traveler, but, having now come safe to port, his drunkenness revived. He saw nothing odd in the open door or the servant's greeting. As he scrambled to the ground, he was back in his first exhilaration.

"My lord!"

Well, why not? This was an honest man who knew quality when he met it.

Humming a tune and making a chain of little pools on the stone flags of the hall, Mr. Lovel followed his guide, who bore his shabby valise, another servant having led away the horse. The hall was dim with flickering shadows cast by the lamp in the doorway and smelt raw and cold as if the house had been little dwelt in. Beyond it was a stone passage where a second lamp burned and lighted up a forest of monstrous deer-horns on the wall. The butler flung open a door.

"I trust your lordship will approve the preparations," he said. "Supper awaits you and when you have done, I will show you your chamber. There are dry shoes by the hearth."

He took from the traveler his sopping overcoat and drew from his legs the pulpy riding-boots. With a bow which might have graced a court he closed the door, leaving Mr. Lovel alone to his entertainment.

It was a small square room, paneled to the ceiling in dark oak and lighted by a curious magnificence of candles. They burned in sconces on the walls, and in tall candle-sticks on the table, while a log fire on the great stone hearth so added to the glow that the place was as bright as day. The windows were heavily shuttered and curtained, and in the far corner was a second door. On the polished table food had been laid—a noble ham, two virgin pies, a dish of fruits and a group of shining decanters. To one coming out of the wild night it was a transformation like a dream, but Mr. Lovel, half-drunk, accepted it as no more than his due. His feather brain had been fired by the butler's "my lord," and he did not puzzle his head with questions. From a slim bottle he filled himself a glass of brandy, but on second thought set it down untasted. He would sample the wine first and top off with the spirit. Meantime he would get warm.

He stripped off his coat, which was dampish, and revealed a dirty shirt and the dilapidated tops of his small clothes. His stockings were torn and soaking, so he took them off and stuck his naked feet into the furred slippers which stood waiting by the hearth. Then he sat himself in a great brocaded armchair and luxuriously stretched his legs to the blaze.

But his head was too much afire to sit still. The comfort soaked into his being through every nerve and excited rather than soothed him. He did not want to sleep now, though a little before he had been crushed by weariness. There was a mirror beside the fireplace, the glass painted at the edge with slender flowers and Cupids in the Caroline fashion.

He saw his reflection, and it pleased him. The long face with the pointed chin, the deep-set dark eyes, the skin brown with weather—he seemed to detect a resemblance to Wharton. Or was it Beaufort? Anyhow, now that the shabby coat was off, he might well be a great man in undress.

"My lord!"

Why not? His father had always told him he came of an old high family. Kings, he had said—of France, or somewhere. A gold ring he wore on his left hand slipped from his finger and jingled on the hearthstone. It was too big for him, and when his fingers grew small with cold or wet, it was likely to fall off. He picked it up and laid it beside the decanters on the table. That had been his father's ring, and he congratulated himself that in all his necessities he had never parted from it. It was said to have come down from ancient kings.

He turned to the table and cut himself a slice of ham. But he found he had no appetite. He filled himself a bumper of claret. It was a ripe, velvety liquor and cooled his hot mouth. That was the drink for gentlemen. Brandy in good time, but for the present this soft wine was in keeping with the warmth and light and sheen of silver.

His excitement was dying now into complacence. He felt himself in the environment for which Providence had fitted him. His whole being expanded in the glow of it. He understood how able he was, how truly virtuous—a master of intrigue, but one whose eye was always fixed on the sun of honor.

And then his thoughts wandered to his son in the mean London lodgings. The boy should have his chance and walk some day in silks and laces. Curse his aliases! He should be Lovel and carry his head as high as any Villiers or Talbot.

The reflection sent his hand to an inner pocket of the coat now drying by the hearth. He took from it a thin packet of papers wrapped in oilcloth. These were the fruits of his journey, together with certain news too secret to commit to writing which he carried in his head. He ran his eye over them, approved them and laid them before him on the table.

They started a train of thought which brought him to the question of his present quarters. A shadow of doubt flickered over his mind. Whose house was this and why this entertainment? He had been expected or some one like him. An old campaigner took what gifts the gods sent, but there might be questions to follow. There was a coat of arms on the plate, but so dim that he could not read it. The one picture in the room showed an old man in a conventional suit of armor. He did not recognize the face or remember any like it.

He filled himself another bumper of claret and followed it with a little brandy. This latter was noble stuff, by which he would abide. His sense of ease and security returned. He pushed the papers farther over, sweeping the ring with them, and set his elbows on the table, a man warm, dry and contented, but much befogged in the brain.

He raised his eyes to see the far door open and three men enter. The sight brought him to his feet with a start, and his chair clattered on the oak boards. He made an attempt at a bow, backing steadily toward the fireplace and his old coat.

THE faces of the newcomers exhibited the most lively surpize. All three were young and bore marks of travel, for though they had doffed their riding-coats, they were splashed to the knees with mud, and their unpowdered hair lay damp on their shoulders.

One was a very dark man who might have been a Spaniard but for his blue eyes. The second was a mere boy with a ruddy face and eyes full of dancing merriment. The third was tall and red-haired, sad of countenance and lean as a greyhound. He wore trews of a tartan that Mr. Lovel, trained in such matters, recognized as that of the house of Atholl.

Of the three he only recognized the leader, and the recognition sobered him. This was that Talbot, commonly known from his swarthiness as the Crow, who was Ormonde's most trusted lieutenant. He had once worked with him; he knew his fierce temper, his intractable honesty. His bemused wits turned desperately to concocting a conciliatory tale.

But he seemed to be unrecognized. The three stared at him in wide-eyed amazement.

"Who the devil are you, sir?" the Highlander stammered.

Mr. Lovel this time brought off his bow.

"A storm-stayed traveler," he said, his eyes fawning, "who has stumbled on this princely hospitality. My name at your honor's service is Gabriel Lovel."

There was a second of dead silence, and then the boy laughed. It was merry laughter and broke in strangely on the tense air of the room.

"Lovel," he cried, and there was an Irish burr in his speech. "Lovel! And that fool Jobson mistook it for Lovat! I mistrusted the tale, for Simon is too discreet even in his cups to confess his name in a change-house. It seems we have been stalking the cailziecock and found a common thrush."

The dark man, Talbot, did not smile.

"We had good reason to look for Lovat. Widrington had word from London that he was on his way to the North by the west marches. Had we found him we had found a prize, for he will play —— with Mar if he crosses the Highland line. What say you, Lord Charles?"

The Highlander nodded.

"I would give my sporran filled ten times with gold to have my hand on Simon. What devil's luck to be marching south with that old fox in our rear!"

The boy pulled up a chair to the table.

"Since we have missed the big game, let us follow the less. I'm for supper, if this gentleman will permit us to share a feast destined for another. Sit down, sir, and fill your glass. You are not to be blamed for not being a certain Scots lord. Lovel, I dare say, is an honester name than Lovat!"

But Talbot was regarding the traveler with hard eyes.

"You called him a thrush, Nick, but I have a notion he is more of a knavish jackdaw. I have seen this gentleman before. You were with Ormonde?"

"I had once the honor to serve his Grace," said Lovel, still feverishly trying to devise a watertight tale.

"Ah, I remember now. You thought his star descending and carried your wares to the other side. And who is your new employer, Mr. Lovel? His present Majesty?"

His glance caught the papers on the table and he swept them toward him.

"What have we here?" and his quick eye scanned the too legible handwriting.

Much was in cipher and contractions, but some names stood out damningly. In that month of October in that year 1715 "Ke" could stand only for "Kenmure" and "Nl" for "Nithsdale."

Mr. Lovel made an attempt at dignity.

"These are my papers, sir," he blustered. "I know not by what authority you examine them."

But the protest failed because of the instability of his legs, on which his potations early and recent had suddenly a fatal effect. He was compelled to collapse heavily in the armchair by the hearth.

"I observe that the gentleman has lately been powdering his hair," said the boy whom they called Nick.

Mr. Lovel was wroth. He started upon the usual drunkard's protestations but was harshly cut short by Talbot.

"You ask me my warrant. 'Tis the commission of his Majesty King James, in whose army I have the honor to hold a command."

He read on, nodding now and then, pursing his mouth at a word, once copying something on to his own tablets. Suddenly he raised his head.

"When did his Grace dismiss you?" he asked.

Now Ormonde had been the duke last spoken of, but Mr. Lovel's precarious wits fell into the trap. He denied indignantly that he had fallen from his master's favor.

A grim smile played round Talbot's mouth.

"You have confessed," he said. Then to the others: "This fellow is one of Malbrouck's pack. He has been nosing in the Scotch westlands. Here are the numbers of Kenmure and Nithsdale to enable the great duke to make up his halting mind. See, he has been with Roxburghe too. We have a spy before us, gentlemen, delivered to our hands by a happy accident. Whig among the sectaries and with Stair and Roxburghe and Jacobite among our poor honest folk and wheedling the secrets out of both sides to sell to one who disposes of them at a profit in higher quarters. Faugh! I know the vermin. An honest Whig like John of Argyll I can respect and fight, but for such rats as this— What shall we do with it now we have trapped it?"

"Let it go," said the boy, Nick Wogan. "The land crawls with them, and we can not go rat-hunting when we are aiming at a throne."

He picked up Lovel's ring and spun it on a finger-tip.

"The gentleman has found more than news in the North. He has acquired a solid lump of gold."

The implication roused Mr. Lovel out of his embarrassment.

"I wear the ring by right. I had it from my father."

His voice was tearful with offended pride.

"The creature claims gentility," said Talbot, as he examined the trinket. "Lovel you call yourself. But Lovel bears barry nebuly or chevronels. This coat has three plain charges. Can you read them, Nick? My eyes are weak. I am curious to know from whom he stole it."

The boy scanned it closely.

"Three of something. I think they are fleur-de-lys, which would spell Montgomery. Or lions' heads, maybe, for Buchan?"

He passed it to Lord Charles, who held it to a candle's light.

"Nay, I think they are Cummin garbs. Some poor fellow dirked and spoiled."

MR. LOVEL was outraged and forgot his fears. He forgot, indeed, most things which he should have remembered. He longed only to establish his gentility in the eyes of those three proud gentlemen. The liquor was ebbing in him and with it had flown all his complacence. He felt small and mean and despised, and the talents he had been pluming himself on an hour before had now shrunk to windlestraws.

"I do assure you, sirs," he faltered, "the ring is mine own. I had it from my father, who had it from his. I am of an ancient house, though somewhat decayed."

His eyes sought those of his inquisitor with the pathos of a dog. But he saw only hostile faces—Talbot's grave and grim, Lord Charles' contemptuous, the boy's smiling ironically.

"Decayed, indeed," said the dark man, "pitifully decayed. If you be gentle, the more shame on you."

Mr. Lovel was almost whining.

"I swear I am honest. I do my master's commissions and report what I learn."

"Ay, sir, but how do you learn it? By playing the imposter and winning your way into an unsuspecting confidence. To you friendship is a tool and honor a convenience. You cheat in every breath you draw. And what a man gives you in his innocence may bring him to the gallows. By ——! I'd rather slit throats on a highway for a purse or two than cozen men to their death by such arts as yours."

In other circumstances Mr. Lovel might have put up a brazen defense. But now he seemed to have lost assurance.

"I do no ill," was all he could stammer, "for I have no bias. I am for no side in politics."

"So much the worse. A man who spies for a cause in which he believes may redeem by that faith a dirty trade. But in ice-cold blood you practise infamy."

The night was growing wilder, and even in that sheltered room its echoes were felt. Wind shook the curtains and blew gusts of ashes from the fire. The place had become bleak and tragic, and Mr. Lovel felt the forlornness in his bones. Something had woke in him which shivered the fabric of a lifetime. The three faces, worn, anxious, yet of a noble hardihood, stirred in him a strange emotion. Hopes and dreams, long forgotten, flitted like specters across his memory. He had something to say, something which demanded utterance, and his voice grew bold.

"What do you know of my straits?" he cried. "Men of fortune like you! My race is old, but I never had the benefit of it. I was bred in a garret and have all my days been on nodding-terms with starvation.

"What should I know about your parties? What should I care for Whig and Tory or what king has his hinder-end on the throne? Tell me in ——'s name how should such as I learn loyalty except to the man who gives me gold to buy food and shelter? Heaven knows I have never betrayed a master while I served him."

THE shabby man with the lean face had won an advantage. For a moment the passion in his voice dominated the room.

"Cursed if this does not sound like truth," said the boy, and his eyes were almost friendly.

But Talbot did not relax.

"By your own confession you are outside the pale of gentility. I do not trouble to blame you, but I take leave to despise you. By your grace, sir, we will dispense with your company."

The ice of his scorn did not chill the strange emotion which seemed to have entered the air. The scarecrow by the fire had won a kind of dignity.

"I am going," he said. "Will you have the goodness to send for my horse? If you care to know, gentlemen, you have cut short a promising career. To much of what you say I submit. You have spoken truth —not all the truth, but sufficient to unman me. I am a rogue by your reckoning, for I think only of my wages. Pray tell me what moves you to ride out on what at the best is a desperate venture?"

There was nothing but sincerity in the voice, and Talbot answered:

"I fight for the king ordained by God and for a land which can not flourish under the usurper. My loyalty to throne, church and fatherland constrains me."

Lovel's eye passed to Lord Charles. The Highlander whistled very softly a bar or two of a wild melody with longing and a poignant sorrow in it.

"That," he said. "I fight for the old ways and the old days that are passing."

Nick Wogan smiled.

"And I for neither—wholly. I have a little of Talbot in me and more of Charles. But I strike my blow for romance—the little against the big, the noble few against the base many. I am for youth against all dull huckstering things."

Mr. Lovel bowed.

"I am answered. I congratulate you, gentlemen, on your good fortune. It is my grief that I do not share it. I have not Mr. Talbot's politics, nor am I a great Scotch lord, nor have I the felicity to be young. I would beg you not to judge me hardly."

By this time he had shrugged into his coat and boots. He stepped to the table and picked up the papers.

"By your leave," he said and flung them into the fire.

"You were welcome to them," said Talbot. "Long ere they get to Marlborough they will be useless."

"That is scarcely the point," said Lovel. "I am somewhat dissatisfied with my calling and contemplate a change."

"You may sleep here if you wish," said Lord Charles.

"I thank you, but I am no fit company for you. I am better on the road,"

Talbot took a guinea from his purse.

"Here's to help your journey," he was saying, when Nick Wogan, flushing darkly, intervened.

"—— you, James, don't be a boor," he said.

The boy picked up the ring and offered it to Mr. Lovel as he passed through the door. He also gave him his hand.

The traveler spurred his horse into the driving rain, but he was oblivious of the weather. When he came to Brampton he discovered to his surprize that he had been sobbing. Except in liquor he had not wept since he was a child.

IN THE DARK LAND*

The Twelfth Tale in the Series, "The Path of a King." Each Story Entirely Complete in Itself.

THE fire was so cunningly laid that only on one side did it cast a glow, and there the light was absorbed by a dark thicket of laurels. It was built under an overhang of limestone so that the smoke in the moonlight would be lost against the gray face of the rock. But, though the moon was only two days past the full, there was no sign of it, for the rain had come and the world was muffled in it. That morning the Kentucky vales, as seen from the ridge where the camp lay, had been like a furnace with the gold and scarlet of Autumn and the air had been heavy with sweet October smells. Then the wind had suddenly shifted, the sky had grown leaden and in a queer, dank chill the advance-guard of Winter had appeared—that Winter which to men with hundreds of pathless miles between them and their homes was like a venture into an uncharted continent.

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* *See note to preceding story.*

One of the three hunters slipped from his buffalo-robe and dived into the laurel-thicket to replenish the fire from the stock of dry fuel. His figure revealed itself fitfully in the firelight—a tall, slim man with a curious lightness of movement like a cat's. When he had done his work he snuggled down in his skins in the glow and his two companions shifted their positions to be near him.

The fire-tender was the leader of the little party. The light showed a face very dark with weather. He had the appearance of wearing an untidy peruque, which was a tight-fitting skin-cap with the pelt hanging behind. Below its fringe straggled a selvage of coarse black hair. But his eyes were blue and very bright and his eyebrows and lashes were flaxen, and the contrast of light and dark had the effect of something peculiarly bold and masterful.

Of the others one was clearly his brother, heavier in build, but with the same eyes and the same hard-pointed chin and lean jaws. The third man was shorter and broader and wore a newer hunting-shirt than his fellows and a broad belt of wool and leather.

This last stretched his moccasins to the blaze and sent thin rings of smoke from his lips into the steam made by the falling rain. He bitterly and compendiously cursed the weather. The little party had some reason for ill-temper. There had been an accident in a creek with the powder supply and for the moment there were only two charges left in the whole outfit. Hitherto they had been living on ample supplies of meat, though they were on short rations of journey-cake, for their stock of meal was low. But that night they had supped poorly for one of them had gone out to perch a turkey, since powder could not be wasted, and had not come back.

"I reckon we're the first as ever concluded to Winter in Kaintuckee," he said between his puffs. "Howard and Salling went in in June, I've heard. And Finley? What about Finley, Dan'l?"

"He never stopped beyond the Fall, though he was once near gripped by the snow. But there ain't no reason why Winter should be worse on the Ohio than on the Yadkin. It's a good hunting-time and snow'll keep the redskins quiet. What's bad for us is wuss for them, says I—I won't worry about Winter nor redskins, if old Jim Lovelle 'ud fetch up. It beats me whar the man has got to."

"Wandered, maybe?" suggested the first speaker, whose name was Neely.

"I reckon not. Ye'd as soon wander a pointer. There ain't no such hunter as Jim ever came out of Virginny; no, nor out of Caroliny neither. It was him that fust telled me of Kaintuck. 'The dark and bloody land,' the Shawnees calls it, he says, speakin' in his eddicated way, and dark and bloody it is, but that's man's doing and not the Almighty's. The land flows with milk and honey, he says, clear water and miles of clover and sweet grass, enough to feed all the herds of Bashan, and mighty forests with trees that thick ye could cut a hole in their trunks and drive a wagon through, and sugar-maples and plums and cherries like you won't see in no set orchard, and black soil fair crying for crops.

"And the game, Jim says, wasn't to be told about without ye wanted to be called a liar—big black-nosed buffaloes that packed together so the whole place seemed moving and elk and deer and bar past counting. . . . Wal, neighbors, ye've seen it with your own eyes and can jedge if Jim was a true prophet. I'm Moses, he used to say, chosen to lead the Children of Israel into a promised land, but I reckon I'll leave my old bones on some Pisgah-top on the borders. He was a sad man, Jim, and didn't look for much comfort this side Jordan. I wish I know'd whar he'd gotten to."

Squire Boone, the speaker's brother, sniffed the air dolefully.

"It's weather that 'ud wander a good hunter."

"I tell ye, ye couldn't wander Jim," said his brother fiercely. "He come into Kaintuckee alone in '52, and that was two years before Finley. He was on the Ewslip all the Winter of '58. He was allus springing out of a bush when ye didn't expect him. When we was fighting the Cherokees with Montgomery in '61 he turned up as guide to the Scotsmen, and I reckon if they'd attended to him there 'ud be more of them alive this day. He was like a lone wolf, old Jim, and preferred to hunt by hisself, but you never knowed that he wouldn't come walking in and say 'Howdy' while you was reckoning you was the fust white man to make that trace. Wander Jim? Ye might as well speak of wandering a hawk."

"Maybe the Indians have got his sculp," said Neely.

"I reckon not," said Boone. "Leastways if they have, he must a' struck a new breed of redskin. Jim is better nor any redskin in Kaintuck' and they knowed it. I told ye, neighbours, of our doings before you come west through the Gap. The Shawnees cotched me and Jim in a cane-brake and hit our trace back to camp so that they cotched Finley too, and his three Yadkiners with him. Likewise they took our hosses and guns and traps and the furs we had gotten from three months' hunting.

"Their chief made a speech saying we had no right in Kaintuckee and if they cotched us again our lives 'ud pay for it. They'd ha' sculped us if it hadn't been for Jim, but you could see they knew him and was feared of him. Wal, Finley reckoned the game was up and started back with the Yadkiners; Cooley and Joe Holden and Mooney—ye mind them, squire? But I was feeling kinder cross and wanted my property back, and old Jim—why, he wasn't going to be worsted by no redskins. So we trailed the Shawnees, us two and come up with them one night encamped beside a salt-lick.

"Jim got into their camp while I was lying shivering in the cane and blessed if he didn't snake back four of our hosses and our three best Deckards. Thar's craft for ye. By sunrise we was riding south on the Warriors' Path but the hosses was plumb tired, and afore midday them pizonous Shawnees had cotched up with us. I can tell ye, neighbors, the hair riz on my head, for I expected nothing better than a bloody sculp and six feet of earth. But them redskins didn't hurt us. And why, says ye? 'Cos they was scared of Jim. It seemed they had a name for him in Shawnee which meant the Old Wolf that Hunts by Night.

"They started out to take us way north of the Ohio to their Scioto villages, whar they said we would be punished. Jim telled me to keep up my heart, for he reckoned we wasn't going north of no river. Then he started to make friends with them redskins, and in two days he was the most pop'lar fellow in that company. He was a quiet man and for general melancholious, but I guess he could be amusing when he wanted to. You know the way an Indian laughs—grunts in his stomach and looks at the ground. Wall, Jim had them grunting all day and, seeing he could speak all their tongues, he would talk serious too. Ye could see them savages listening like he was their own sachem."

BOONE reached for another faggot and tossed it on the fire. The downpour was slacking, but the wind had risen high and was wailing in the sycamores.

"Consekince was," he went on, "for prisoners we wasn't proper guarded. By the fourth day we was sleeping round the fire among the Shawnees and marching with them as we pleased, though we wasn't allowed to go near the hosses. On the seventh night we saw the Ohio rolling in the hollow and Jim says to me it was about time to get quit of the redskins. It was a wet night with a wind, which suited his plan, and about one in the morning, when Indians sleep soundest, I was woke by Jim's hand pressing my wrist.

"Wal, I've trailed a bit in my day, but I never did such mighty careful hunting as that night. An inch at a time we crawled out of the circle—we was lying well back on purpose—and got into the canes. I lay there while Jim went back and fetched guns and powder. The Lord knows how he done it without startling the hosses. Then we quit like ghosts and legged it for the hills. We was aiming for the Hap, but it took us thirteen days to make it, traveling mostly by night, and living on berries, for we durstn't risk a shot. Then we made up with you. I reckon we didn't look too pretty when ye see'd us first."

"Ye looked," said his brother reflectively, "like two scare-the-crows that had took to walkin'. There was more naked skin than shirt about you, Dan'l. But Lovelle wasn't complaining, except about his empty belly."

"He was harder nor me, though twenty years older. He did the leading, too, for he had forgotten more about woodcraft than I ever know'd——"

The man Neely, who was from Virginia, consumed tobacco as steadily as a dry soil takes in water.

"I've heard of this Lovelle," he said. "I've seed him too, I guess. A long man with black eyebrows and hollow eyes like as he was hungry. He used ter live near my folks in Palmer County. What was he looking for in those travels of his?"

"Hunting maybe," said Boone. "He was the skilfullest hunter, I reckon, between the Potomac and the Cherokee. He brought in mighty fine pelts, but he didn't seem to want money. Just so much as would buy him powder and shot and food for the next venture, you understand— He wasn't looking for land to settle on neither, for one time he telled me he had had all the settling he wanted in this world— But he was looking for something else. He never talked about it, but he'd sit often with his knees hunched up and his eyes staring out at nothing like a bird's. I never know'd who he was or whar he come from. You say it was Virginny?"

"Aye, Palmer County. I mind his old dad, who farmed a bit of land by Nelson's Cross Roads, when he wasn't drunk in Nelson's tavern. The boys used to follow him to laugh at his queer clothes and hear his fine London speech when he cursed us. By thunder, he was the one to swear! Jim Lovelle used to clear us off with a whip and give the old man his arm into the shack. Jim too, was a queer one, but it didn't do to make free with him unless ye was lookin' for a broken head. They was come of high family, I've heerd."

"Aye, Jim was a gentleman and no mistake," said Boone. "The way he held his head and looked straight through the man that angered him. I reckon it was that air of his and them glowering eyes that made him powerful with the redskins. But he was mighty quiet always. I've seen Cap'n Evan Shelby roaring at him like a bull and Jim just staring back at him, as gentle as a girl, till the cap'n began to stutter and dried up. But, Lordy, he had a pluck in a fight, for I've seen him with Montgomery. He was eddicated too, and could tell you things out of books. I've knowed him sit up a night talking law with Mr. Robertson— He was always thinking. Queer thoughts they was sometimes."

"Whatten kind of thoughts, Dan'l?" his brother asked.

Boone rubbed his chin as if he found it hard to explain.

"About this country of Ameriky," he replied. "He reckoned it would soon have to cut loose from England and him knowing so much about England I used ter believe him. He allowed there 'ud be bloody battles before it happened, but he held that the country had grown up and couldn't be kept much longer in short clothes. He had a power of larning about things that happened to folks long ago called Greeks and Rewmans that pinted that way, he said. But he held that when we had fought our way quit of England, we was in for a bigger and bloodier fight among ourselves. I mind his very words.

" 'Dan'l,' he says, 'this is the biggest and best slice of the world which we Americans has struck, and for fifty years or more, maybe, we'll be that busy finding out what we've got that we'll have no time to quarrel. But there's going to come a day, if Ameriky's to be a great nation, when she'll have to sit down and think and make up her mind about one or two things. It won't be easy, for she won't have the eddication or patience to think deep and there'll be plenty selfish and short-sighted folk that won't think at all. I reckon she'll have to set her house in order with a hickory stick. But if she wins through that all right, she'll be a country for our children to be proud of and happy in.' "

"Childern? Has he any belongings?" Squire Boone asked.

Daniel looked puzzled.

"I've heerd it said he had a wife, though he never telled me of her."

"I've seed her," Neely put in. "She was one of Jake Early's daughters up to Walsing Springs. She didn't live no more than a couple of years after they was wed. She left a gal behind her, a mighty fine-looking gal. They tell me she's married on young Abe Hanks. I did hear that Abe was thinking of coming West, but them as told me allowed that Abe hadn't got the right kinder wife for the Border. Polly Hanker they called her, along of her being Polly Hanks, and likewise wantin' more than other folks had to get along with. See?"

This piece of news woke Daniel Boone to attention.

"Tell me about Jim's gal," he demanded.

"Pretty as a peach," said Neely. "Small, not higher nor Abe's shoulder, and as light on her feet as a deer. She had a softish laughing look in her eyes that made the lads wild for her. But she wasn't for them and I reckon she wasn't for Abe neither. She was nicely eddicated, though she had jest had field-schooling like the rest, for her dad used to read books and tell her about 'em.

"One time he took her to Richmond for

the better part of a Winter where she larned dancing and music. The neighbors allowed that turned her head. Ye couldn't please her with clothes for she wouldn't look at the sun-bonnets and nettle-linen that other gals wore. She must have a neat little bonnet and send to town for pretty dresses. The women couldn't abide her, for she had a high way of looking at 'em and talking at 'em as if they was jest black trash. But I never could jest understand why she took Abe Hanks. 'Twasn't for lack of better offers."

"I reckon that's women's ways," said Boone meditatively. "She must ha' favored Jim, though he wasn't partikler about his clothes. Discontented, ye say she was?"

"Aye. Discontented. She was meant for a fine lady, I reckon. I dunno what she wanted, but anyhow it was something that Abe Hanks ain't likely to give her. I can't jest pictur her in Kaintuck!"

Squire Boone was asleep and Daniel drew the flap of his buffalo-robe over his head and prepared to follow suit. His last act was to sniff the air.

"Please God the weather mends," he muttered. "I've got to find old Jim."

A VERY early next morning there was a consultation. Lovelle had not appeared and hunting was impossible on two shots of powder. It was arranged that two of them should keep camp that day by the limestone cliff while Daniel Boone went in search of the missing man, for it was possible that Jim Lovelle had gone to seek ammunition from friendly Indians. If he did not turn up or if he returned without powder, there would be nothing for it but to send a messenger back through the Gap for supplies.

The dawn was blue and cloudless and the air had the freshness of a second Spring. The Autumn color glowed once more, only a little tarnished; the gold was now copper, the scarlet and vermilion were dulling to crimson. Boone took the road at the earliest light and made for the place where the day before he had parted from Lovelle. When alone, he had the habit of talking to himself in an undertone.

"Jim was hunting down the west bank of that there crick and I heard a shot about noon beyond them big oaks, so I reckon he'd left the water and gotten on the ridge."

He picked up the trail and followed it with difficulty for the rain had flattened out the prints. At one point he halted and considered.

"That's queer," he muttered. "Jim was running here. It wasn't game neither, for there's no sign of their tracks."

He pointed to the zigzag of moccasin prints in a patch of gravel.

"That's the way a man sets his feet when he's in a hurry."

A little later he stood and sniffed, with his brows wrinkled. He made an epic figure as he leaned forward, every sense strained, every muscle alert, slim and shapely as a Greek—the eternal pathfinder.

"There's been an Indian here," he meditated. "In war-trim, I reckon."

And he took a tiny wisp of scarlet feather from a fork. Like a hound he nosed about the ground till he found something.

"Here's his print," he said. "He was a-followin' Jim, for see! He has set his foot in Jim's tracks. I don't like it. I'm fear'd of what's comin'."

Slowly and painfully he traced the footing which led through the thicket toward a long ridge running northward. In an open grassy place he almost cried out. The redskin and Jim was friends. See, here's their prints side by side going slow. What in thunder was old Jim up to?

The trail was plainer now and led along the scarp of the ridge to a little promontory which gave a great prospect over the flaming forests and yellow glades. Boone found a crinkle of rock where he flung himself down.

"It's plain enough," he said. "They come up here to spy. They was feared of something and whatever it was it was coming from the west. See, they kep' under the east side of this ridge so as not to be seen and they settled down to spy whar they couldn't be observed from below. I reckon Jim and the redskin had a pretty good eye for cover."

He examined every inch of the eyrie, sniffing like a pointer-dog.

"I am plumb puzzled about that redskin," he confessed. "Shawnee, Cherokee, Chickasaw— It ain't likely Jim would have dealings with 'em. It might be one of them Far Indians."

It appeared as if Lovelle has spent most of the previous afternoon on the ridge, for he found the remains of his night's fire half-way down the north side in a hollow thatched with vines. It was now about three o'clock. Boone, stepping delicately, examined the ashes and then set himself on the ground and brooded.

When at last he lifted his eyes his face was perplexed.

"I can't make it out nohow. Jim and this Indian was good friends. They was in a hurry, for they started out long before morning. . . . I read it this way. Jim met a redskin that he knowed before and thought he could trust anyhow, and he's gone off with him seeking powder. It'd be like Jim to dash off alone and play his hand like that. He figured he'd come back to us with what we needed and that we'd have the sense to wait for him. I guess that's right. But I'm uneasy about the redskin. If he's from north of the river, there's a Mingo camp somewhere about and they've gone there. I never had much notion of Seneca Indians and I reckon Jim's taken a big risk."

All evening he followed the trail which crossed the low hills into the cane-brakes and woodlands of a broader valley. Presently he saw that he had been right and that Lovelle and the Indian had begun their journey in the night, for the prints showed like those of travelers in darkness. Before sunset Boone grew very anxious. He found traces converging, till a clear path was worn in the grass like a regulation war-trail. It was not one of the known trails, so it had been made for a purpose; he found on tree-trunks the tiny blazes of the scouts who had been sent ahead to survey it.

It was a war-party of Mingos or whoever they might be, and he did not like it. He was puzzled to know what purchase Jim could have with those outlawed folk. And yet he had been on friendly terms with the scout he had picked up. Another fact disturbed him. Lovelle's print had been clear enough till the other Indians joined him. The light was bad, but now that print seemed to have disappeared. It might be due to the general thronging marks in the trail, but it might be that Jim was a prisoner, trussed and helpless.

He supped off cold jerked bear's meat and slept two hours in the canes, waiting on the moonrise. He had had dreams, for he seemed to hear drums beating, the eery tattoo which he remembered long ago in border-raids. He woke in a sweat, and took the road again in the moonlight. It was not hard to follow and it seemed to be making north for the Ohio.

Dawn came on him in a grassy bottom, beyond which lay low hills that he knew alone separated him from the great river. Once in the Indian Moon of Blossom he had been this far and had gloried in the riches of the place where a man walked knee-deep in honeyed clover. "The dark and bloody land!" He remembered how he had repeated the name to himself and had concluded that Lovelle had been right and that it was none of the Almighty's giving. Now in the sharp Autumn morning he felt its justice. A cloud had come over his cheerful soul.

"If only I knowed about Jim," he muttered. "I wonder if I'll ever clap eyes on his old face again."

Never before had he known such acute anxiety. Pioneers were wont to trust each other and in their wild risks assumed that the odd chance was on their side. But now black forebodings possessed him, born not of reasoning but of instinct. His comrade somewhere just ahead of him was in deadly peril.

NO SOUND broke into the still dawn, but to his quiet mind the world seemed full of alarms. He quickened his steady hunter's lope into a run and left the trail for the thickets of the hillside. The camp might be near and he was taking no chances.

As he climbed the hill he told himself feverishly that there was nothing to fear; Jim was with friends who had been south of the river on their own business and would give him the powder he wanted. Presently the two of them would be returning to the camp together and in the months to come he and Jim would make that broad road through the Gap at the end of which would spring up smiling farmsteads and townships of their own naming. He told himself these things but he knew that he lied.

At last, flat on the earth, he peered through the vines on the north edge of the ridge. Below him half a mile off rolled the Ohio, a little swollen by the rains. There was a broad ford and the waters had spilled out over the fringe of sand. Just under him, between the bluff and the river, lay the Mingo camp, every detail of it plain in the crisp weather. In the heart of it a figure stood bound to a stake and a smoky fire burned at its feet. There was no mistaking that figure.

Boone bit the grass in a passion of anger. His first impulse was to rush madly into the savages' camp and avenge his friend. He had half-risen to his feet when his reason told him it was folly. He had no weapon but ax and knife and would only add another scalp to their triumph. His Deckard was slung on his back, but he had no powder. Oh, to be able to send a bullet through Jim's head to cut short his torment. In all his life he had never known such mental anguish, waiting there an impotent witness of the agony of his friend. The blood trickled from his bitten lips and a film was over his eyes.

Lovelle was dying for him and the others. He saw it all with bitter clearness. Jim had set off with a friendly Indian to seek powder, taking risks as he always did. He had fallen in with a Mingo band, and fled before them, toward a river, drawing him away from his companion. He had been taken, and had been ordered to reveal the whereabouts of the hunting-party. He had refused and endured the ordeal. Memories of their long comradship rushed through Boone's mind and set him weeping in a fury of affection. There was never such a man as old Jim, so trusty and wise and kind, and now that great soul was being tortured out of that stalwart body and he could only look like a baby and cry. Bitter silence lay over that great half moon of gloating painted faces. He himself seemed to be one of them.

As he gazed, it became plain that the man at the stake was dead. His head had fallen on his chest and the Indians were cutting the green withies that bound him. Boone looked to see them take his scalp, and so wild was his rage that his knees were already bending for the onslaught which should be the death of him and haply of one or two of the murderers.

But no knife was raised. The Indians seemed to consult together and one of them gave an order. The body was dragged clear of the coals and flung on a litter of branches. The camp was moving, the horses were saddled and presently the whole band began to file off toward the ford. The sight held Boone motionless. His fury had gone and only wonder and awe remained. As they passed the dead each Indian raised his ax in salute—the salute to a brave man and a great chief. The next minute they were plashing through the ford.

An hour later when the invaders had disappeared on the northern levels, Boone slipped down from the bluff to the camping-place. He stood still a long time by his friend, taking off his deerskin cap so that his long black hair was thrown over his shoulders.

"Jim, boy," he said softly. "I reckon you was the general of us all. The likes of you won't come again. I'd like ye to have Christian burial."

With his knife he hollowed a grave, where he placed the body still wrapped in its deerskins. He noted on a finger of one hand a gold ring, a queer possession for a backwoodsman. This he took off and dropped into the pouch which hung round his neck.

"I reckon it 'ud better go to Miss Hanks. Jim's gal 'ud vally it more'n a wanderin' coyote."

When he had filled in the earth he knelt among the grasses and repeated the Lord's Prayer as well as he could remember it. Then he stood up and rubbed with his hard brown knuckles the dimness from his eyes.

"Ye was allus lookin' for something, Jim," he said. "I guess ye've found it now. Good luck to ye, old comrade."

THE DEVIL'S DOORYARD

A COMPLE NOVELETTE by W C Tuttle

Author of "Figures of Speech," "No Wonder," etc.

I HAS to disagree with yuh, cowboy. There is some romance left. A little barb-wire and a few sheep don't cut the romance out of the cow-land. She's there, Sleepy."

"Where?" I asks politely. "Me and you ain't found none of it, Hashknife. Since we shook loose from Willer Crick we ain't done nothin' more romantic than gettin' bucked off or lettin' a gun go off accidental. There ain't a man left in the cow-country that would get ambition if somebody called him a liar, and the villains has gone plumb out of the female-stealin' business."

"Well, get off your bronc, Sleepy. Folks'll think you're a statoo on a horse. I'm too hungry to argue. Git off and look for romance, cowboy."

"In this town? Shucks. False fronts, licensed gamblin'-house, livery-stable, general merchandise store and a barber-shop. Romance ——!"

"We-e-e-ll, get off. Some ham and eggs looks plenty romantic to me."

I gets off my bronc, limbers up my legs and looks around. The sign on the store proclaims it to be the Sundown Mercantile Company.

"Sundown City," says Hashknife. "She's a cow-town, pure and simple."

"Pure and simple ——!" says I.

"Why argue?" he says, sarcastic-like. "All day long you finds fault. You'd kick if yuh was goin' to get hung, Sleepy Stevens. Ain't nothin' right in your eyes?"

"Pure and——"

I reckon the argument had gone far enough, but that wasn't no way to bust it up. A bullet splinters the top of the tie-rack, another one busts the glass in the store-window and another one scorches a lousy dog which was asleep in the shade of the saloon porch, and it went *ki-yi-ing* off down the street. Three punchers comes gallivantin' out of the saloon-door, sifting lead back inside, while several more oozes out the back door, hunting for a place to get behind. I never seen so much lead wasted and nobody saturated. Somebody heezes more bullets in our direction, and I stands there with my mouth wide open until Hashknife kicks my feet from under me, drops a rifle in my lap and then does a dive across the sidewalk.

"Yuh might do a little somethin' for yourself," says he, as I sits there digging dirt out of my eyes from the last bullet. Then he yells:

"Sleepy, you —— fool, get under cover! Ain'tcha got no sense?"

I crawls under the sidewalk and sprawls beside him.

"Yuh ain't got the sense that —— gave geese in Ireland," says he. "Watcha settin' over there for? You ain't got no brains a-tall."

"I never got hit," says I.

"You never got— Saya-a-y! Oh, you didn't get hit, eh? Well, that's too bad!"

"Well, what they shootin' at me for?"

"We might ask 'em—some time. Dang yuh!"

That last wasn't for me. A puncher raised up out of a wagon-box across the street and his bullet plowed a furrow in the sidewalk between me and Hashknife. Hashknife's .45-70 spoke its little piece, and soon we seen that feller hop a circle plumb around the corner. Somebody else took a shot at him on the wing, but I reckon that he was so bow-legged that he didn't get hit.

Another Johnny Wise got up on the roof of that gambling-house and begins to spin lead promiscuous-like, sort of protecting himself with the top of the false front, but he didn't reckon on anybody using a rifle on his fort. He wasn't shooting at us, but we didn't mind that. Hashknife lines up on that false front and his first bullet kicked a hole in them old boards that you could shove your hand through.

Mister Johnny Wise just upended over the ridge of the building and took the high dive over the other side. Somebody creased the peak of the roof just a second after his panties got away from there.

"You keep on and you'll hurt somebody," says I. " 'Pears to me that you're horning into this shindig without knowing the facts of the case. You may be shooting at our side."

"In a case like that, I ain't got no side, Sleepy. I has been shot at and the same makes me angry."

"Sa-a-ay," says a voice kinda behind us, and we turns our heads to see a little bow-legged puncher hugging the side of the building.

"My ——!" gasps Hashknife. "Hello, Windy."

The bow-legged *hombre* stares at us and then begins to laugh.

"Hashknife Hartley, yuh old son-of-a-gun! Where about in —— did yuh come from?"

"Git down!" yells Hashknife, as the feller starts to come over to us.

"Thank yuh," says he. "I plumb forgot them or'nery Bar 20 cow-burglars."

He gets down on his belly and comes angling over to us, and him and Hashknife shakes hands laying down.

"Sleepy, meet Windy Woods. Windy used to be with the Hashknife."

"Yore bunkie?" asks Windy, pointing at me.

"Yeah. Some human drawback, Windy. I has to tell him when to chaw and kick him when it's time to spit. I shore has a lot of chores with that pelican."

"Haw! Haw! Haw! Howdja ever get so far north, Hashknife?"

"Follerin' Sleepy. Part Eskimo. Kinda hankers for home scenes. What's gone wrong in the saloon?"

"Oh, yeah."

Windy peers over the edge of the sidewalk and gets dusted with a bullet. Then he ducks down low and reaches for his cigaret-papers.

"Had a killin' over there a while ago. My boss, old Mike Haley, mingles lead with Blazer Thorn, who own that —— Bar 20, and they both cashes in.

"Then some of the Bar 20 slaves gits into their heads that they must do something naughty with their six-guns, and I— I dunno whether anybody else hooked a harp or not. Most of the Bar 20 are inside the saloon, except one which is on the roof of the gamblin'-house."

"He ain't up there now," says Hashknife; "chased him over the edge. One of 'em got in a wagon-box over there, but I made the old box leak and he sloped."

"Yeah, I know," says Windy, sad-like. "That was me."

"I begs yore pardon," says Hashknife. "Why didn't yuh holler?"

"Holler ——! I didn't have none comin'. I thought you was some more of them Bar 20's, so I circled to get yuh from behind, but I got a look at yuh and then I knowed you was just company comin' to our party."

"How many in your outfit, Windy?"

"Me."

"Oh!" grunts Hashknife. "They was all shootin' at you?"

"All except 'Snag' Thorn—thankin' him very kindly."

"Good shot?"

"Ve-e-e-ry good. Yuh see, it was his pa that got a one-way ticket to ——, and sonny feels bad. Danged bunch of cow-thieves! I reckon they aimed to wipe out the Circle Dot, but li'l bow-legs was too fast. I'm foreman of the Circle Dot, Hashknife.

"Yep. Foreman, cow-hands, cook, and chambermaid. Me and old Mike run the place fine, in spite of him crabbin' all the time. Poor old devil. Tough? *Mm-m-m!* Blazer Thorn heezed five .45's into him but he hung on to the bar and emptied his gun into Blazer. Betcha that saloon looks be-yutiful inside."

"What was you doin'?" asks Hashknife.

"Me? Aw, I couldn't help Mike none and then my thoughts turned to the old man Woods' li'l bow-legged offspring, and I picked up one of the Bar 20 punchers in my arms and packed him plumb to the door, while I backs out.

"Then I kicks him in the seat of the pants, rakes the saloon with me gun, and humped into that wagon-box. Nobody knowed where I went until you sent me a message to get out of there, and then them Bar 20's are so flustered that they missed me somethin' rediculous."

"Better keep your head down," advises Hashknife, when Windy peeks over the edge.

"Looky!" grunts Windy. "Sons of guns want peace."

THERE'S a white handkerchief waving out of the saloon-door and then a man comes out, looks around and motions for the rest to come out, which they does, packing a man with them.

They crosses the street to a wagon, wherein they places their man, and then they drives away, two men in the wagon and three more on horses. Then another man rides out from behind the saloon, sees us and comes over with both hands in sight. He's the dark, hatchet-faced person, sort of serious-looking, and sets his bronc like a regular puncher. We're on the sidewalk now and he pulls up near us and says:

"Woods, I'm kinda sorry this happened. I ain't extendin' no sympthy to the Circle Dot, yuh understand, but I don't like this six-to-one fightin'."

"I didn't get hurt, none to speak about," says Windy, "and I didn't hang out no white flag. If yuh asks me, Snag, I'd say that yo're payin' money to a lot of danged poor shots."

He turns slow-like, and looks down the road. Then he turns back to us.

"You ought to be glad," says he.

"Yeah?"

"What's goin' be done with the Circle Dot?" he asks.

"The same of which is none of your —— business, Thorn. I reckon the three of us can wiggle along—as long as we've got any cows left to foller around."

He just sets there and looks at us, and I can see that he's got the face of a killer, but he don't make no break for his gun. He looks real hard at Hashknife, sort of sizing him up, and then he turns his horse and rides away.

"Bad *hombre?*" I asks.

"Well," says Windy, "he's called 'Snag.' They don't make 'em faster with a gun, but he's got pe-culiar ideas. I don't reckon Snag would shoot a man in the back nor quarrel with a drunk man and I ain't never heard of him swearin' at anybody, but he's a chip off the old block, and Blazer Thorn was plumb pizen in a fight."

"What did yuh mean by 'three of us?'" I asks.

"You two and me. I'm givin' yuh each a job."

"Well," says Hashknife after a while, "a feller's got to get a job once in a while, I reckon, ain't he, Sleepy?' Sleepy's looking for romance, Windy. Know what romance is?"

"Yes," says Windy, "I don't, but if it is somethin' yuh can find in the or'neriest danged cow-country on earth you'll find her here on the Sundown range, y'betcha. There's everythin' here except peaceable people. Let's get poor old Mike and make some funeral arrangements."

We buries old Mike the next day at Sundown City and there wasn't much of a audience. The preacher hurried so he'd have time to say a few words over the remains of Blazer Thorn, and then we went to the Circle Dot.

"Hackamore" Allen, the sheriff, comes out to the ranch and kinda sets around a while. He's a gloomy-looking jasper with a tired eye, and he radiates cheer like a undertaker.

"Whatcha goin' to do with the ranch, Windy?" he asks.

"Run it."

"You don't own it."

"What the —— has that got to do with it, Hack? She don't owe nobody a cent, and there's over a thousand head of good cows—or was, until the last time the Bar 20 branded."

"Yeah? Well, I reckon I'll be driftin' on."

He nods to me and Hashknife, and then rides back down the road.

"Windy," says Hashknife. "Would yuh mind gossipin' a little? Me and Sleepy don't *sabe* the state of affairs around here."

"Just ordinary," says Windy. "She

begins quite a long time ago, gents. This here range used to be milk, honey and brotherly love, you know it? Sure she did. Blazer Thorn and Mike Haley was thicker than thieves until one day Mike stops for supper at the Bar 20. I reckon that Mike had a scoop or two under his belt and he feels comical. He says to Blazer, 'Know why I eats here so often?' Blazer says, 'Why?' '

"Old Mike says, 'I like the taste of my own beef.'

"Well, Blazer must 'a' been dyspeptic or somethin' that day, 'cause he kicks back his chair and calls Mike a —— liar. Mike's plumb hard-boiled and he don't think that any man knows enough about him to call him a name like that, but some punchers grabbed the two of 'em and stopped a piece of gun-play. Blazer orders Mike off the ranch. Mike was joshin' at first, but he's been losin' a lot of stock, and he gets to thinkin'—him bein' sore anyway, and well—yuh know them things grows. Blazer's plumb wild. Swears that the Circle Dot is stealin' his cows, the same of which changes this country a heap, scaring out the bees and smearin' the honey in the mud.

"Both outfits draws a dead-line. Ours is that old cross-roads, and the Bar 20 declares Cow Crick to be the stoppin'-place of the Circle Dot outfit. Then Blazer and Mike makes a agreement. Both of them pelicans are deadly with a gun. Blazer has a wife and this boy. Yeah, this started when Snag was mostly a ganglin' kid, practisin' with a .22.

"Both of them *hombres* knows it's suicide to meet. Mike ain't wistful to make Mrs. Thorn a widder with a orphing kid, so he agrees. Mike is to use Saturday as his day in town, and Blazer is to appear in person on Wednesdays.

"Fine. Folks got so used to it that they takes it for granted. Well, Mrs. Thorn goes the way of all critters, and Snag grows up, but the feud goes on just the same—only worse. It got so that the punchers of both outfits acts mean towards each other. There is a few killin's.

"I reckon that Mike forgot. He sold a bunch of cows to a buyer from Chicago, and the man is in a hurry to get away; so Mike meets him in Sundown City—on Wednesday. You *sabe* the rest, I reckon. Mike and Blazer comes face to face in the saloon. Blooey! They ain't met before for ten years, but they didn't need no introduction. I reckon that's all. My gosh, I ain't talked that much for three years."

"Is there anything in this rustlin' stuff?" asks Hashknife.

"Everythin'," nods Windy. "Everybody suspects everybody else, but she's a cinch that the Bar 20 brands more than their share. Funny thing, though, Hashknife, nobody knows where the stock goes. Just two ways out. Yuh can take a herd to the railroad at Hollister or yuh can take 'em back through Hangman's Pass and over to Blue Nose. There ain't no other way out of this basin, but no cows have been taken either way."

"Can't yuh take 'em over the divide?" I asks.

"Naw. Not unless the cows has wings."

"That's it," grins Hashknife. "You been lookin' at the ground when yuh should 'a' been lookin' in the air, Windy. They flew."

"Mebby. Honest to gosh, I'm willin' to believe it, Hashknife."

"Who's this comin'?" I asks.

"That's Bowers. He owns the Bar B outfit, which is between us and the Bar 20. He's likely comin' up here to beef about somebody stealin' his danged cows."

WINDY was right. This Bowers is a melancholy-looking jasper with sorrel hair, and he talks like he had a mouthful of mush.

"Yeah, I'm losin' cows all the danged time," he wails, humping over his saddle-horn. "Wisht I knowed what to do."

"I'll tell yuh what yuh ought to do," suggests Hashknife.

"What?"

"Get your adenoids cut out."

"My addy-noids?"

"Uh-huh. Your talk sounds like a bogged-down calf. You know what I mean—kinda *glub-glub*."

"Well," says he foolish-like: "Well, I'll be ——!"

Then he looks over at Windy, who looks as serious as a funeral.

"You *sabe* what he means?"

"Sure. He's right, too."

"Well. Mebbe that's right. Huh!"

Then Mr. Bowers swings his horse around and goes *poco poco* off down the road, deep in thought.

"What's adenoids, Hashknife?" asks Windy. "I know danged well that Bowers ought to have his cut out, yuh understand, but I ain't clear in my own mind what they be."

"Somethin' that grows in his head," says Hashknife.

"Sure," nods Windy. "I hope they has to remove his whole danged head to get at 'em."

"What did the sheriff mean, Windy, when he wanted to know what was going to be done with the Circle Dot? Didn't Haley have no relatives?"

"I dunno—dang it all, Sleepy. Never said nothin' to nobody about any. Never left no will nor nothin'. Reckon he feels that he's so danged tough that he'll outlive anybody else anyway, so why make a will? I've got somethin'—wait."

Windy goes into the house and brings out a couple of sheets of paper.

"This is all I can find," says he. "Looks like Mike started to write a letter and then tore it up, 'cause this is just part of it."

The top part of the letter had been torn off, but what we've got reads like this:

> —family, and I reckon you'll have it all when I pass out. Feller back East tells me where he thinks you are, so I'm taking a chance. I would rather like to see you, but this ain't no——

And the rest is torn off.

"Here is the envylope," says Windy. "Same as the old man's, only his middle letter was H, and this'n is J. What is a em-po-ree-um?"

"I dunno," says Hashknife, looking at the envelope. "Must be somethin'."

"My ——, you've got a fine head on yuh," says Windy. "You're goin' to do well."

"I sure has," grins Hashknife, "and I'll prove it to yuh, Windy. I've got a friend in Frisco—a lawyer, and he'll find out for us."

"Lawyers costs money, Hashknife."

"This one won't. I packed this whippoorwill out of a tight corner on the Barbary Coast one night and I'm bettin' he ain't forgot it. He comes danged near bein' a sailor, y'betcha. Crimps, they calls 'em, and I sure put a crimp into about six of 'em.

"He wasn't very heavy and I just had enough hooch under my belt to shoot straight, but at that I had to hit two with my gun-barrel. If M. J. Haley is at the em-po-ree-um, I'm bettin' that Billy Winters will find him. Sounds like a gamblin'-house to me."

"All right, cowboy," grins Windy. "You do the writin', will yuh? I ain't noways pencil-wise—me."

HASHKNIFE writes the letter, explaining the best he can, and we posts it the next day in Sundown City. We don't meet none of the Bar 20 bunch, but we does run into the sheriff and he seems glad to see us.

"Nice weather," says Hashknife, and then adds, "I like it hot."

"Yeah?" says the sheriff, and then he says to Windy—

"Baldy Willis got shot yesterday."

"Did he?" says Windy. "Accidental, I suppose. Gol dang it, sheriff, they ought to have a school where a feller like him can learn to handle a gun and ——"

"He didn't get shot accidental," says the sheriff, deliberate-like.

"Oh!" grunts Windy. "Sassed somebody, eh?"

"Nope. He was crossin' around at the lower end of Devil's Dooryard and got a rifle-bullet plumb through his shoulder."

Windy squints at the sheriff and then at us. Then he rubs his nose, kinda thoughtful-like, and says—

"Well, I reckon you can talk a little more, sheriff."

"Baldy says that he was knocked plumb hazy, but he seems to remember hearin' a voice say, 'Maybe you'll keep off the Circle Dot Range after this.' "

"That's a —— lie!" snaps Windy, dropping his hand to his gun.

"Now, now, don't get in a hurry," says the sheriff. "I'm just saying what Baldy said. Yuh can't blame me for what somebody else said, can yuh?"

"Yuh hadn't ought to repeat scandal," says Hashknife. "Now, we'll tell it to somebody, kinda exaggeratin' it a little, and they'll tell it to somebody else, kinda exaggeratin' it a little, and by and by she gets to be a regular whale of a statement."

"I'm just tellin' what Baldy said," insists the sheriff. "He says he thinks he heard that, and——"

"If yuh go out to the Bar 20 soon, yuh can tell Baldy that I think he's a —— liar," says Windy.

"Bar 20?" says Hashknife, like he'd never heard of it before. "Oh yeah. Ain't that the place where all their cows has twin calves, Windy?"

"Uh-huh. Funny, ain't it. The Circle Dot cows are like Mary's little lamb. They never bring nothin' but their tails behind them."

"I don't know who shot Baldy," says the sheriff, "but I do know that I'm plumb sick and tired of the way things is goin'. The Bar 20 is losin' cows every day and Bowers is wailin' all the time about his cows being missin'. I tell yuh, it's got to stop."

"You —— tootin' she has!" snaps Windy. "The Circle Dot ain't bothered yuh none about missin' cows, but if anybody asks yuh—we're loser, y'betcha. I reckon you've got plenty to do, dry-nursin' Snag Thorn and 'Blubber' Bowers, so I won't take up none of yore time. *Sabe?*"

"Bowers said—" begins the sheriff, but Windy stops him.

"Bowers be ——!"

"He's got complaints."

"Adenoids," says Hashknife. "Aggravated case. Yuh ought to send him to a doctor."

"Addy—what?" asks the sheriff.

"Noids. Shouldn't be surprized if they're doin' the work that his brain ought to do. You've got a touch of 'em, too. How's your tonsils?"

"My which?"

"Let's play a game of pool, Windy," suggests Hashknife. "It's too hot to stand here in the sun. See yuh later, sheriff."

"Baldy might not live," says the sheriff, offhanded-like.

"Well," says Windy, "ther's enough of 'em at the Bar 20 to bury him decently, but tell 'em not to fire no salutes over his grave, 'cause they might accident'ly hurt each other. *Adios.*"

We left the sheriff standing there, chawing at the corner of his mustache, and we went into the saloon and started a game. The bartender looks us over, sort of suspicious-like, but can't refuse to let us play.

"All I asks of you fellers is this. If any of the Bar 20 shows up, fer ——'s sake don't shoot toward my back-bar," says he. "That last ruckus ruined all my whisky-glasses and everybody has had to drink out of beer-glasses, and they ain't got no sense of proportion. *Sabe?*"

Bowers comes in after while and stands around watching the game. After while he says to Windy, confidential-like—

"I been up to the Bar 20."

"Well, well," grunts Windy, amazed-like. "You're gettin' to be a regular traveler. When did yuh get back and how are the folks?"

"Baldy ain't expected to live."

"Who don't expect him to live—Baldy?"

"Nope. He's danged awful low and might pass out any time."

"He ain't got nothin' on the rest of 'em," states Windy, "and they can all pass out, for all of me."

"Snag says somebody has got to pay for shootin' Baldy."

"Well, if he has to pay what Baldy's worth, I reckon it won't break nobody."

"Somebody took seven white-faced cows of mine out of my Salt Spring Corral, and I can't find 'em," says Bowers, complainin'-like.

"Yuh sure got troubles, ain't yuh, feller?" laughs Hashknife, squinting down his cue. "Yuh ought to have patience, don't yuh know it?

"Ever hear of Job? No? He had boils. Fact. Millions of 'em, but he stuck it out and didn't whimper.

"You've got a cinch alongside of poor old Job. You ain't got nothin' but loss of beef, other folks' troubles and adenoids. Get cheerful, why don't yuh?"

"Well, dawggone it, I lost seventeen head of cows last——"

"I tell yuh what to do," says Hashknife, serious-like. "You make out a list describin' your lost cows, givin' the name, age and general disposition and mail it to us, will yuh? Fine!"

"What good will that do yuh?"

"No good on earth; but yuh hankers to tell about 'em so bad that I just thought it might relieve yuh to set down and write it out—and I don't like to listen to your voice. Honest to grandma, I don't, Bowers. I ain't jokin'."

Bowers goes out, talking to himself, and Windy sets down in a chair.

"Mamma mine!" he chuckles. "Hashknife, you sure knows how to talk to folks. I wish I had eddication like that. All I can do is say something that is either plumb full of sugar, or else it's fightin' talk.

"You can say awful things to people and send 'em away talking to themselves, and they don't know whether to get sore or shake hands with yuh. I'll say you're a wonder."

FOR a couple of days we had perfect peace at the ranch. We don't do a danged thing—much, except set around and wait for trouble. Windy insists that the Bar 20 is going to make trouble for us; so we polishes up all the guns and waits for the explosion.

Bowers pesticates up our way and sets down with us. I reckon he's lost so much stock that it's on his mind all the time.

"I'll be busted in a little while," he wails. "I just sets there and watches my money disappear. Was over to the Bar 20 yeste'day. Doctor don't know yet if Baldy will pull through or not. I asked Snag if he had any suspicions who shot Baldy, and he said he sure did. I asked him who."

"He told yuh it was none of your business," says Hashknife.

Bowers looks at Hashknife queer-like and then says—

"How did yuh know that?"

"Deducted it, Blubber. I could tell that by lookin' at yuh. Tomorrow I'm goin' over and talk with Snag Thorn."

"You are not!" declares Windy.

"Uh-huh, I sure am. Now, I know what I want to do, Windy."

"You'll get killed sure as thunder."

"Thanks, Windy."

"I wouldn't advise it," says Bowers. "I sure wouldn't."

"Which entirely makes up my mind," grins Hashknife. "Why don't you rise to object, Sleepy?"

"Go ahead," says I. "Ventilation won't hurt yuh none, I reckon."

Hashknife went. About noon the next day he saddles his bronc, refuses to let us go with him, and rides away.

"You ain't got a lick of sense, Hashknife!" yells Windy.

"I know it," says Hashknife. "This is a job that takes brains, so I'm leavin' the brains behind me to keep safe."

"Now, what did he mean, Sleepy?" asks Windy.

"I dunno. The longer I lives with that blamed hatchet-faced cross between a danged fool and a heavenly angel, the less I *sabe* his *wau-wau*. Mebbe he wants to commit suicide, but I'm bettin' money that he ain't."

It was about two hours before we seen him come into sight. He pokes into the ranch, takes his saddle off and comes up to the porch, dragging the saddle with him.

"Well, yuh got back, I see," grins Windy.

"Yuh got good eyesight, Windy. Awful hot today. Got a blister on my heel, too."

"Well, did yuh bring any messages from the Bar 20, Hashknife?" I asks.

"Uh-huh—two. Long distance, as yuh might say."

"Meanin' what?" inquires Windy.

Hashknife pulls his saddle over to him and yanks it around. Then he points to a long jagged rip in the fork, where a bullet plowed its way. Then he points to a jagged hole, drilled plumb through the right side of the cantle.

"Read 'em for youselves," says he, grinning. "The first one busted into the fork and the next one just grazed my boot as I flipped off the saddle."

"Where?" asks Windy.

"Just across the Cow Crick. I reckon it's Cow Crick. I'm just goin' up the far bank, when I gets reminded that I ain't wanted. I humps out of the saddle before the next message arrives. I sure comes close to gettin' peeled. I lit low down behind the bank and my bronc went across the crick into some willers. I sure tried to spot that bushwhacker, but he was too far away. A magpie gave him away by flyin' over his location and then doin' a upward twist, but there wasn't much between him and me, and the danged fool shoots too close for comfort. Then I had to chase that fool bronc for half a mile before I got my hands on him, and I got a blister on my heel—dang the luck!"

"You ought to cuss your luck," says Windy. "You're lucky to be alive."

"Must be a big blister," complains Hashknife. "Got my feet wet, too."

"I hope you're satisfied," says I, and Hashknife nods.

"Uh-huh, I'm satisfied of one thing, Sleepy."

"What's that?"

"I dunno—yet. I've got to do somethin' for that blister."

Hashknife limps down to the bunkhouse, dragging his saddle.

"What do yuh reckon he found out?" asks Windy. "Why is he satisfied?"

"Don't ask me, Windy, and it won't do yuh no good to ask him. A clam is a howling hyena beside that jasper, when he wants to keep still about his thoughts."

Then he wants to see the place they calls the Devil's Dooryard; so Windy guides us to that place. It sure looks like it might 'a' been. Once on a time it was a volcano which busted out the side of the mountain and it sure made a barren spot out of a piece of country about two miles wide and three miles long.

Man, that must 'a' been a hot place at one time. There ain't a danged thing growing there. She's just a humped-up mass of pillars, boulders and jagged rocks, kind of red and yaller and melted-like. The floor of it is solid rock, where the lava spewed over the side of the mountain. This rock is kinda like glass, having been heated so blamed hot.

We rides up one side of it, almost to the top, but she's all alike. It ain't no place to ride a horse on account of the sharp rocks. At the top is just one high cliff of the same rocks, sticking two or three hundred feet high into the air. The whole divide is one series of cliffs. We rides back to the foot of it and sits down to rest in the shade of a pillar.

"This place is sure well named," opines Hashknife. "I reckon it was too hot for the devil, so he moved to his present location. This is where that Bar 20 puncher got shot, eh?"

"That's what they say," nods Windy. "It's about five miles to the Bar 20 from here. I reckon he just hung on and let his bronc take him home."

"Do yuh reckon he lied?" asks Hashknife.

"No, I don't. Barrin' the fact that he works for the Bar 20, Baldy ain't such a bad *hombre*. I worked with him on the Seven Bar Seven Horse outfit, and he ain't the kind that would lie thataway. Likely he just got it in his mind, don't yuh know? Kinda knowin' he was on the Circle Dot Range, and then gettin' shot thataway, he might 'a' imagined somebody yelled at him."

"I reckon somebody yelled at him," says Hashknife.

"Yuh think he—uh—told the truth?" asks Windy.

"I dunno. Mebbe they did and mebbe they didn't. If they did, the Circle Dot has got it on the Bar 20, 'cause nobody yelled at me, that's a cinch."

"I reckon they keeps close watch on us," opines Windy.

WE RIDES back to the ranch and the next morning we went to Sundown City. As we rides in past the little depot, the agent yells at us and we goes over. He's got a telegram for us, which reads:

> WILL ARRIVE WEDNESDAY. HANG ON UNTIL I GET THERE.
> Signed M. J. HALEY.

"Holy henhawks!" explodes Windy. "He's comin'! Hang on until I get there! That sounds like old Mike's voice. Betcha forty dollars he's a go-getter."

"That's tomorrow," says Hashknife. "What's the nearest station down the line, Windy?"

"Kelly's Fork. It's about six miles, but a train don't stop there unless she's flagged."

"We'll flag her," says Hashknife. "We're going to surprize some of these wise jaspers. *Sabe?* If we waits for him to come here, everybody will see him, don't yuh see? That'll make four of us, Windy, and if this here Haley is hard-boiled we can stand off the Bar 20 or any other cow-stealin' outfit."

"Yeah, that's a hy-iu scheme, Hashknife. We'll just do that little thing. Train is due along there about noon."

There's a lot of Bar 20 broncs at the tie-rack, and Hashknife wants to go over and see what the owners look like, but me and Windy points out the error of his ways and tells him that we've got to be intact to meet the new owner of the Circle Dot.

"I reckon it's right," admits Hashknife, "but I feels that I'm bein' hoodled out of town. I'd swap lead with all that bunch, Windy—if they can't shoot any straighter than they did at you."

"That *hombre* that bushwhacked you shot straight enough," says I.

"Nope. He would have hit me both times."

"Maybe he didn't want to hit yuh."

"Never thought of that, Sleepy. Huh! He's a wonder at missin', if he didn't."

The next day we rides to Kelly's Fork, and takes a saddled horse for our new boss to ride back. We flagged the train and I'm betting that half of the passengers thought it was a hold-up. The conductor howls like blazes when he finds why we stopped him, but Hashknife says:

"Shucks, you ought to be glad we only want a passenger. We'll go with yuh."

The conductor cusses a little more, but

swings on to the coach with us and we all pilgrims down the aisle, the conductor calling:

"M. J. Haley! M. J. Haley! M. J. Haley! Is M. J. Haley on board?"

We went through two cars before we gets a response. A tired-looking girl takes the conductor by the sleeve and stops him. He says to her:

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I haven't time to talk to you now. M. J. Haley! M. J. Haley! Is M. J. Haley on board?"

"I am M. J. Haley," says the lady. "Is—is somebody looking for me?"

"M. J. Haley?" grunts Windy. "Nun-not M. J. Huh—Haley of the Circle Dot?"

"Yes," says she, "from San Francisco."

"Well, get off!" snaps the conductor. "I can't hold this train all day."

I grabs her valise, and we staggers down the aisle and swings to the ground.

"Must be a mistake," opines Windy, scratching his head. "We was lookin' for a man named M. J. Haley."

"A lawyer, a Mr. Winters, sent me," says she. "I am Mary Jane Haley."

"Well, I hope to die," gasps Windy. "I hope to die."

"If yuh don't shut your mouth you'll get your tonsils sunburnt," says Hashknife.

"Well, I'll be everlastin'ly teetotally jiggered!" grunts Windy. "Whatcha know about that? Was Mike Haley a kin of yours, miss?"

"He was my father's brother, I believe," says she, and I can see her eyes laughing at Windy's funny expression.

"Uh," says Windy, kinda vacant-like. "Yes'm."

"Will you take me out to the farm?" she asks.

"Farm?" says Windy, and then looks at Hashknife, whose face is serious. Then Windy looks at her and half-nods his head.

"Yeah—oh, sure. Uh-huh, but we don't call 'em farms, ma'am. We can take yuh out there—in fact, we came after yuh, but——"

Windy glances at her clothes and then looks at Hashknife, who shakes his head and says:

"Yuh see ma'am, we looked for a man person, who natcherally don't wear skirts, and we ain't got nothin' but a saddle-horse and no extra pants and—Sleepy, fer ——'s sake get in on this explanation, will yuh? Standin' there like a grinnin' hyener."

"I think I understand," says she.

"Bless yuh for that, ma'am," says Hashknife, wiping his brow. "That —— Sleepy makes me sore sometimes. Oh, he talks a plenty when he ought to keep still."

M. J. Haley sees the funny side of things and we all laughs together.

"I've got a idea," says Hashknife. "Mebbe that little store over there has overalls, Windy."

"I would wear them," says Mary Jane, and Hashknife grins like a fool and says—

"Come on ma'am; if he's got 'em we'll get 'em, and if he ain't got no back room for yuh to dress in I'll make him come out in the street."

He had 'em all right. I dunno how Mary Jane got into 'em, but she did. I let her ride my bronc, 'cause the one we brings for M. J. Haley wasn't no ladies' saddle-animal. Yuh can mostly always sometimes tell about a feller if yuh see him on a high-minded bronc, and we wanted M. J. Haley to measure right up to us.

Mary Jane never rode a horse before, but she was game. I knowed danged well that them overalls ached a heap by the time we hit the Circle Dot, but she don't chirp a bit over discomfort.

Sing Lee has swamped out Mike's bood-wah for her and we lets her move right in. She ain't been in there long when Bowers comes poking up the main road. He naturally comes over to see us.

"Blubber has likely lost another cow," says Windy, but Blubber didn't speak of lost cows. He rides up to us and says—

"Did he come?"

"Who?" asks Windy.

"The new feller who is goin' to boss this outfit."

"There ain't no feller goin' to boss this outfit," states Windy.

"Zasso? Huh. Station agent says that yuh got a telegraft from M. J. Haley who says he's comin' today. Train comes in, but nobody gets off. Some of the Bar 20 was down there to see what he looks like."

"Was they disappointed?" asks Hashknife.

"Natcherally. I comes up to see why he didn't come. The sheriff was wonderin' who he was, and I thought maybe you'd—uh——"

"Did yuh?" says Hashknife. "Your

thoughts are like your talk, Bowers—kinda suckin' mud. What's it any of the sheriff's business?"

"I dunno. Say, Baldy Willis died this mornin'."

"——!" says Windy, soft-like. "Poor old Baldy."

"Uh-huh," admits Bowers. "But it's just like I said—he didn't have no danged business on this range, nohow. When a feller has been warned to keep off——"

"Let your voice fall, Blubber," says Windy. "You've talked enough. *Sabe?* Me nor none of this outfit had anything to do with killin' Baldy, and the next *hombre* what insinuates that we did is goin' kihootin' to his God or beat me on the draw. That goes for you, the sheriff or any of that —— cow-stealin' Bar 20 outfit. *Sabe?*"

"Honest to —— I ain't insinuatin' nothin' " wails Bowers. "Whatcha ridin' me fer? I've lost twenty-seven head of cows in the last week, and I ain't——"

"Yo're all packed, wired and billed for shipment—git off this ranch!" yowls Windy. "I don't care if somebody steals all your cows! I hope they do. I hope you're the last calf they slickears. I hope they slaps every brand in the State register on your hide and then adds a dewlap and notches your ears."

"That ain't no way to talk," grumbles Blubber, tearful-like. "I try to git along and——"

"You better do somethin' besides try to git along," says Windy. "You just 'get along,' Bowers, and get along fast."

Bowers swings his horse around and points toward home.

"What did he want?"

We turns and looks at Mary Jane, standing in the doorway.

"Aw-w, he's a danged maul-headed prairie-dog, which has to chirp every time somebody lifts one of his dogies," says Windy.

MARY JANE laughs and shakes her head.

"I don't think I understand."

"He means that this person ain't such a much," explains Hashknife, "and that he gets husky in the neck because somebody rustles his beef."

"You might try saying it different," says she, looking at me.

"Well," says I, "this whippoorwill is about three jumps short of being half-witted and he——"

"No," says Mary Jane, "that isn't exactly clear either."

"He ain't got good sense, ma'am," says Hashknife.

"The —— I ain't!" I snaps, 'cause it makes me mad.

"Back up—you're in your own loop," grins Hashknife; "I was speakin' about Bowers, Sleepy," and then he turns to Mary Jane.

"This person ain't got good sense, ma'am. He thinks that somebody is stealin' his cows and he comes over here to talk about it."

"Oh, I see; who does he suspect?"

"Us, I reckon," says Windy. "They think we killed Baldy Willis, too."

"Yuh better tell her the whole sad tale, Windy," says Hashknife. "Remember she ain't wise to that layout here."

"That's right, Hashknife, I forgot. I want to give her some of the old man's things too."

"Let's go inside," says Mary Jane. "It's too hot out here."

"You tell her, Windy," says Hashknife. "Me and Sleepy will be down at the bunk-house."

In about half an hour we hears a pistol-shot and we tumbles out of the bunk-house, heeled for trouble. There ain't nobody in sight, but pretty soon Windy comes down to see us.

"Hear her shoot?" he asks. "Didja?"

"Her shoot?" parrots Hashknife.

"Uh-huh. Mary Jane Haley fired her first shot. Honest to gosh. Missed my ear by the breadth of a gnat's whisker."

"Shootin' at you?"

"We-e-e-ll, kinda at me, Hashknife. I tells her the story of the Circle Dot and then I gives her old Mike's effects, which included his old .45 Colt. She looks at the old gun, and says, 'Do I have to carry a gun like that?'

"I says, 'It's a danged good gun, if it ain't too hard to pull.' I shows her what I means and she tries it. Dang the luck! I thought Mike emptied it into Blazer, but I reckon he only shot five times."

"Scare her?" I asks.

"I dunno. I went under the sofy like a picket-pin when he sees a hawk. When I peeked out she's still got the gun in her hand, and is kinda feelin' of the spot over her heart. I loaded it for her, but made her leave it on the table until I got to the door."

"We'll teach her how to shoot," says I.

"No you won't," objects Windy, "but we will have to teach her to point it at enemies instead of friends."

"Here comes the sheriff," says Hashknife. "Wonder what he wants?"

The sheriff rides in the gate and heads toward the house, so we moves up and meets him at the steps.

"Nice large afternoon," says Hashknife, pleasant-like.

The sheriff gives a short nod and looks at the open door of the house. Then he turns to Windy, and says—

"I'd like to see M. J. Haley."

"Yuh would?"

"I said I would."

"What for?"

Windy says this kinda soft-like and the sheriff squints at him for several seconds before he says—

"Baldy Willis died."

"Yeah, we heard about it," says Hashknife. "What's M. J. Haley got to do with Baldy Willis' demise?"

"Baldy was shot on the Circle Dot Range," says the sheriff, meaning-like. "He didn't have no business on this range, I reckon, but—I want to see the owner of this outfit. *Sabe?* He's responsible, or I'll hold him responsible until I can put the deadwood on the guilty man."

"Snag Thorn send yuh?" asks Hashknife.

"He did not! He told me to keep out of this, but I'm the sheriff, and——"

"Bein' sheriff means quite a lot to you, don't it?" asks Hashknife. "You'd just be plumb miserable if yuh wasn't sheriff, wouldn't yuh, Allen?"

"I didn't come here to listen to you yappin'," says he. "I want the man who owns this here ranch. *Sabe?*"

"Were you looking for some one?"

We all turns and looks at the door where Mary Jane is standing. The sheriff looks at her and then at us.

"There's the owner of the Circle Dot," says Hashknife. "Try to arrest her."

The sheriff stares at her for a long time and then looks at us.

"Yuh figure she had anythin' to do with the killin' of Baldy?" asks Windy.

The sheriff sort of starts to reach up to his hat but his hand stops and rubs his chin. Then he turns his horse around and starts for the gate. He just says one word, and that is kinda like he was speakin' to himself—

"——!"

Mary Jane looks at us and then at Hack Allen, who is poking off down the road. Hashknife steps up beside her and then grins at us.

"The boss was sure heeled," says he, and then he took her hand from the folds of her skirt, and I'm a liar if she didn't have the .45 Colt. In the other hand she's got a small bottle. Hashknife peers at the bottle and then kinda grins back of his hand.

"I—I—Mr. Woods said it needed oil, so I—" says she.

"Uh-huh," says Hashknife, serious-like. "But yuh hadn't ought to—uh—ma'am. I reckon a gun has feelin's and mebbe—well, I've took that kinda stuff myself, and I sure mixed her plentiful with lemon juice, and even at that—uh——"

"I thought that oil was oil," says she.

"Oh sure," nods Hashknife. "It sure is, but—uh—that old six-shooter ain't sick. *Sabe?* I'll get yuh some gun-oil."

"Would yuh have shot at the sheriff?" asks Windy.

"It—it seems to be the thing around here," says she, serious-like. Hashknife stares at her for a moment and then at us.

"Ma'am, I'm plumb glad you wasn't a he. Some fellers are so danged timid."

"I am," says she. "I have never done anything more serious than to sell lace in a department store. The lawyer found me there and I had just got my week's pay, and also a notice that my services were no longer required. The lawyer was lovely to me, and—he said that Mr. Hartley was a close friend of his."

"Sure was close once," nods Hashknife. "Old Whiskers with his hay-hook wasn't far behind us either. I reckon there's a heap of difference between the he-men out here and the ones in town. Cowpunchers are rough, ma'am, but they don't mean half what they do or say. I hope you'll excuse Windy and Sleepy if they makes bad breaks at times. —— knows I've done my dangest for 'em."

"I KNEW a cowboy once," says she. "I know now that he was a cowboy, but he didn't say he was. It was in San Francisco a year ago. There were four of us—another girl, and two young men from the store and myself. We went slumming down to Chinatown and the Barbary Coast.

"We were up in a Chinese noodle-house when a number of young men came in; I think they were drunk. One of them tried to kiss me. The young man who was with me asked him to stop and another of the crowd knocked him down.

"The Chinese were frightened. Some of the other men grabbed Gladys, and—oh, it was awful! I saw one of the men hit a Chinaman with a chair and then one of them grabbed me and tried to pull me across the table, but just then a man came from somewhere.

"He was wearing a big hat and I remember that he did not have any necktie or coat on, and he was smiling. He crashed into the crowd and tore his way to us girls, and then I saw his hand swinging a gun, and it hit a man on the head—then another!"

Mary Jane's eyes were as big as saucers as she describes it.

"Then somebody fired a shot and I saw the blood trickle down his cheek where something had hurt him and he stopped hitting and began shooting. The booth was filled with smoke in a moment and the shots ceased. I heard him say—

"'Ma'am, I reckon we better get out of here before the police and the undertaker comes.'

"I don't know how we ever got out of there. I had to step over men who were lying on the floor and then I found myself in the open air, and Gladys was crying, and the man got a hack and took us home. I tried to thank him, but he just grinned, and then I—I grabbed him and kissed him! Honest I did. And as I ran into the house I heard him say—

"'Well, I'll be hornswoggled!'

"I have never seen him since then. I know I did not thank him enough, but if I ever see him again——"

"Yuh done quite a lot for him," says Hashknife. "More than the lawyer done for me. Still, I reckon, he didn't feel like kissin' me. Did the police make any fuss over it?"

"We looked in the papers the next day, and it told about a fight in which three gangsters were killed and two more wounded. They were all wanted by the police, but it said nothing about the cowboy. If I ever see him again I want to thank him again."

"Sure," says Windy; "we all do. He sure done us a favor, too, ma'am."

"I wish you would call me Mary Jane."

"All right," grins Hashknife, "but you've sure got to cut out misterin' us, Mary Jane. We're sort of ele-mental, as the poet would say. Hash, wind and sleep. Ain't that elements? Haw! Haw! Haw!"

"Well," says Mary Jane, grinning, "yuh might give me that gun-oil, so's I can limber up this old six-gun."

"Wel-l-l-come to our cow-camp!" explodes Windy. "That sounded just like old Mike, y'betcha. Mary Jane, if yuh wants anything out of the ordinary in cuss words I can loan yuh some that the old man used to patronize."

"They'll come to her," grins Hashknife. "Wait till she gets mad."

A little later here comes a tall gray-haired feller in a buckboard. He drives up to the bunk-house and speaks to Windy.

"Howdy, judge," says Windy. "Meet Mister Hartley and Mister Stevens. Gents, this is Judge Waugh."

We shakes hands all around and then the judge says:

"Windy, I came up here to have a talk with you. I suppose you heard about Pete Kelso getting shot."

"When did this happen?" asks Windy.

"About noon or a little later—over by Cactus Cañon. Jimmy and Al Orr found him. Shot with a .45-70. Likely live, I guess."

"——!" exploded Windy. "Why, we came that way—huh!"

"Jimmy and Al said they thought it was you. They said there was four in the bunch."

"Cactus Cañon is on the Circle Dot Range, too," says Windy, serious-like, and the judge nods.

"Yes."

"We don't know who done it, judge," says Hashknife. "It's a cinch that we didn't. Somebody ripped my saddle all to pieces the other day, when I rides on to Bar 20 land."

"Tell me about it."

Hashknife gives him the details.

"I don't know," says the judge. "Of course there has been bad blood between these outfits for years. Each accuses the other of rustling, but neither has any evidence. This shooting is getting serious. Lost any stock lately, Windy?"

"I dunno. I do know that I seen seven cows with young calves down by the old salt springs, and the next day I finds seven bawlin' cows and nary a calf. It ain't reasonable to reckon that them cows all deserted their offsprings."

"The Bar 20 is boiling," states the judge. "Snag Thorn is keeping cool, but he's cool just like his father used to be. The sheriff wanted to arrest all of you, but Snag told him to keep out of it and let him attend to you. They had quite a quarrel. I met Bowers as I came out, and he told me he lost some more cows and a couple of young horses. I guess Bowers is just about cleaned out."

"Well," says Hashknife, "we ain't honin' for trouble, but if they comes out here I reckon we'll do like they do in Spain when it rains."

"How's that?" asks the judge.

"Let it rain."

"*Um-yah*," says the judge, grinning. "Well, I hope it won't be a cloudburst, boys. I've always kinda figured that some day something is going to bust in the Sundown country. Bar 20 says that Circle Dot are rustlers, and——"

"We says that they are," finishes Windy. "She's a de-plorable fact, judge."

"Bowers loses cows, too," grins Hashknife. "Everybody loses some. I reckon there's goin' to be work for the legal lights before long."

"*Hm-m-m*," says the judge; "I hope so, Hartley, but it kinda looks like there wouldn't be nothin' but cripples to go to court."

After the judge has gone Hashknife goes out and sets on the top pole of the corral where he acts like he's thinking. I throwed a rock at him but he just ducked, stuck in that position and kept on thinking.

"Let him alone," advises Windy. "That whippoorwill has somethin' on his mind. I jist worked long enough with him to respect him with a gun or brains."

"He sure can shoot," I admits, but Hashknife never looked at us.

Me and Windy went down to the bunkhouse and argued over the rules of two-handed poker for about an hour, when the door opens and there stands Sing Lee, with his hands wrapped up in his apron.

"Missie gone fo' lide," says he, offhanded-like.

"Ride?" says Windy, foolish-like, and Sing nods.

"Yessum. Yo' *sabe* glay hoss, Tinker name?"

"Uh-huh."

"She lide glay hoss day she come. Yo' *sabe?* I t'ink she lide allesame glay hoss today. Blimeby I see glay hoss Tinker name. She no like, yo' *sabe?* She allesame like glay hoss like Tinker. Me seeum."

Windy sets there, staring at Sing, and then he gets slow-like to his feet.

"Wait a minute, Sing. She rode a gray horse, but didn't ride Tinker?"

"Yessum. Tinker down by collal. She rideum glay hoss. Yo' *sabe?*"

Windy beats it for the door and I went behind him. Down by the corral stands the gray horse she rode the day she came here. We went into the stable, but the saddle ain't on the peg.

"What's all the fuss about?" I asks.

"My ——!" wails Windy. "She hooked a hull on to Cheater!"

"Meaning what?"

"Cheater!" wails Windy. "That sunfishin' man-eater from Wyoming. Looks like Tinker. Oh, —— it! Sleepy, that hawse is plumb loco! He might go good for a mile and then dump her off and walk on her. He's a —— tiger!"

"Glay hoss," says Sing, stony-faced, coming up to us; "look like Tinker, yo' *sabe?* Me t'ink —— bad hoss, when me see Tinker. Mebbyso she get dump. Me no see her go. Where Lashknife? Mebbyso he go too."

"I suppose that —— fool rode a gentle bronc," wails Windy. "Where did she go-o-o-o?"

"You must 'a' herded sheep," says I. "I knowed a shepherd who used to say, '*Ya-a-a-a-s* and *no-o-o-o-o*,' just like you do."

"Funny, ain'tcha?" he howls. "Lady in peril, and you gets comical."

"What do yuh want me to do—turn a handspring or climb a tree? We don't know where she went, do we?"

"My ——, you can ask useless questions, Sleepy! Don't know where she went, do we? I ask yuh to answer it yourself. You makes me tired, I tell yuh. Just stand around and ask fool questions, when a-a——"

"Lady is in peril. Now, just what had we ought to do, Windy? Can yuh track that pet man-eater? Got any idea what direction said horse favors to go? If you——"

"Look!" yelps Windy. "——'s bells, look what's comin'!"

UP THE road comes a cloud of dust and in and out of that cloud goes a dust-colored horse, bucking like a crazy animal. Sunfish, worm fence, swapping ends and spinning like a top. Straight for the gate it comes, bucking straight for us. We climbs the corral fence just as the animal pitches straight into it, and goes down in a splinter of cottonwood poles and a cloud of dust.

I fell off the fence and got up just in time to see Hashknife untangle himself and step away from the horse. He looks down at it, trying to get up, and then at Windy.

"That's a —— vigorous animal, Windy," says he foolish-like, and then he takes a deep breath and says—

"Get your Winchester and saddle—quick!"

"Why—uh—why—" grunts Windy.

"——!" he explodes. "Get into action, will yuh! I'll tell yuh later."

Well, it didn't take us long to saddle up, get our rifles and breeze off down the road, Hashknife in the lead.

"Mary Jane," he grunts, as we swing in close to him. "She saddled that gray bronc. Wanted to ride, asked me to go with her. I didn't like the looks of that gray, so I traded with her. We went half-way to town. I saw that the gray wasn't bridlewise, but he didn't act bad until we met the sheriff, and then he got restless. *Sabe?*

"Me and the sheriff had words. That —— gray started to pitchin', and I busted a rein and couldn't pull his head, and—and the —— jug-head bucked all the way back home. First runnin' bucker I ever seen. My ——, but that bronc can hop, skip and jump somethin' awful."

"Mary Jane?" asks Windy. "Where is she?"

"They took her with 'em," says Hashknife, kinda whispering. "The sheriff and Bowers and a couple of them Bar 20 *hombres*."

"Took her!" explodes Windy. "What for, Hashknife?"

"Said she owned the Circle Dot and they wanted her. Seems that that last feller that was shot died. I called the sheriff and he drawed, but I shaded him a little. What in —— do yuh keep a bronc like that around for?

"I thought it was the same gray that Mary Jane rode, honest I did. I never looked at it close but I seen it kinda hump under the saddle, and I thinks maybe it feels cocky and I was goin' to shake it up a little, but I was the one that got shook. Couple of bullets fanned past me, but they'd 'a' had to have a shotgun to hit me on the wing thataway."

"What are we goin' to do?" I asks.

"Do? Sleepy, we're goin' to get our hoss back or they'll have to build a new town. I'm goin' through that town like quicksilver through a sieve."

"And land in the penitentiary," says I. "Cool off a little, Hashknife, and do a little thinking. There's only three of us, yuh understand."

"They'll be lookin' for us," opines Windy, and then he asks—

"Was Snag Thorn with 'em?"

"Nope. One feller had a broken nose and a cock-eye, and the other had bat-ears and a yellow mustache."

"'Blondy' McClure and 'Peeler' Malloy," says Windy. "As fine a pair of horse-thieves as ever wore guns. Them two sure do show lack of Sunday schoolin', and I reckon this is the time that we teaches 'em a few morals. Lemme get my old 40-82 lined up on either one—just lemme, tha'sall."

"You too," says I, complaining-like. "Want to kill somebody? You two *hombres* hankers for gore regardless, don't yuh? Regular killers, eh? It's a danged good thing you has a cool brain among yuh."

"Cool ——!" snorts Hashknife. "Froze since the Winter of the big wind."

"Course, this stealin' of our lady boss don't mean nothin' to you," says Windy, sarcastic-like, easing himself in the saddle when his bronc kinda loosens up. "You better go back and chop wood."

"We won't need any heat," says I and everybody shuts up. We swung into town and rode straight to a crowd in front of the saloon. On the sidewalk lays a feller who looks a heap like he had met the enemy. We jerks up in front of 'em and looks the bunch over. Hashknife and Windy cocked their rifles and I'm expectin' things to start whooping. This bat-eared, yellow-mustached *hombre* steps out of the crowd, and Windy spurs in close to him and says:

"Talk out loud, Blondy. Where's the lady?"

"*Aw-w-w-w,* I dunno!" wails Blondy. "She went, —— it!"

"Anybody around here got any intelligence?" asks Hashknife, looking around, and then he sees the bartender.

"What happened?" asks Hashknife.

"I didn't see it all," says the bartender. "I heard somebody yell that here comes the sheriff and some feller with a lady, and I just got to the door when I hears a gun pop, and I seen Peeler's horse buckin' across the street, draggin' Peeler.. Then I sees Snag Thorn running for his horse and I seen a female on a horse runnin' down the street. The sheriff took a shot at somebody—I think it was Snag, but he didn't hit him."

"The lady shot Peeler," says a skinny puncher.

"She did not!" declares a little bow-legged puncher. "That first shot hit the casing of the store door right beside me. Snag Thorn killed Peeler."

"Just the same, she shot at somebody."

"Mebbe it was me then," grins bow-legs.

"Where'd the sheriff go?" asks Windy.

"To his office, I reckon," says the bartender. "Him and Bowers was together."

"Do yuh reckon Mary Jane went home?" asks Windy.

"She didn't pass us," says I.

"The female took a shot at Peeler," insists the skinny puncher. "I seen it. Peeler yanked his gun to—well, just then Snag shot from over there on the sidewalk, and I seen Peeler fall off. I dunno which shot hit him."

"I tell yuh that first shot hit."

We whirled and rode for the sheriff's office and didn't wait to hear the finish of the argument. Their two horses are outside the door. We hops right off and went inside. The sheriff and Bowers are in there. Bowers is setting on the table, working some shells into a Winchester, while the sheriff is washing his wrist where Hashknife's bullet creased it. Bowers drops the rifle and puts his hands up, but the sheriff keeps right on bathing his wrist. He just looks at us and then back to his wash-basin. Hashknife says:

"Sheriff, for a dobie cent I'd fill you full of lead. Where is Miss Haley?"

"I dunno. Mebbe she's at the Bar 20 by this time. I reckon Snag Thorn will know what to do with her when he catches her."

"What in —— does he want her for?" asks Hashknife.

"Snag's lost two men and a lot of cows and maybe he's seein' a chance to get even."

Bang!

The wash-basin hops right out from under the sheriff's hands and a splash of soapy water hits him right in the face.

"Say it this way— 'He thinks he's lost cows,' " advises Hashknife, rubbing his thumb softly over the hammer of his cocked Winchester.

"Th-thinks he's lost cows," mumbles the sheriff, shaking the soap out of his eyes.

"I lost fifteen head and—" began Bowers, but Windy jabs him in the ribs with his rifle-barrel.

"Who in —— cares what you lost? You're lucky to be alive."

"Did Snag Thorn follow Miss Haley out of town?" I asks.

"Yeah! She shot one of his men, didn't she? Maybe he rode to the ranch to get the rest of his men. Said he was going to clean out the Circle Dot while he had men enough left to help him."

"Said that, did he?" asks Windy.

"He did. Whatcha mean by comin' down here and actin' like this? I'm the sheriff of this county and I won't stand——"

"I sure apologizes to the wash-basin," says Hashknife, "but that's as far as I'll go, Allen. You didn't have no right to bring her here."

"Didn't I? Two men killed on her ranch, and cows stolen and——"

"Whope!" snaps Hashknife. "You never seen any of them on the Circle Dot. You don't know that they've lost cows."

"Snag said——"

"Sure. Stick to what you heard, sheriff —not to what you think you know."

"She shot Peeler Malloy," states Bowers.

"You're a liar!" snaps Windy.

"Well," sniffles Bowers. "Maybe I am mistaken, but I thought Blondy said——"

"There's too danged much talk about what somebody else said," says Hashknife. "Come on, boys; let's get travelin'."

"Where yuh goin'?" asks the sheriff.

"Goin' to find out who has been doin' all this dirty work. *Sabe?*"

"Zasso? Lemme tell yuh I'm the sheriff around here and I——"

The sheriff took hold of Hashknife's left arm, like he was goin' to stop him, and I said a short prayer for Mister Allen. Hashknife had that Winchester in his left hand, and it looked like the sheriff was goin' to try to take hold of it, but Hashknife's right fist hooked him under the chin and he lit on the back of his neck in the corner of his office and stayed there.

"He-he's goin' to be sore as ——," states Bowers, awed-like.

"Little liniment will fix him," says Hashknife. "Come on, boys."

WE WENT out of that town like bats out of —— and we never broke a running lope until we hit the ranch. Mary Jane ain't there. Sing Lee says he ain't seen her.

"What will we do now?" asks Windy, but Hashknife whirls his bronc around and we follers him. We sailed out of the gate and hit straight for the hills.

"You aimin' to hit the Bar 20?" yells Windy.

"Just like a ton of lead," says Hashknife.

We tore across the dead-line, and never slowed up until the Bar 20 ranch-house is in sight.

"Don't shoot until yuh has to," advises Hashknife.

We ripped right into their front yards, and set up our horses. Just then Snag Thorn limps out of the front door and looks us over. I'll say this much for him; he didn't act a danged bit nervous.

"Where's our boss?" asks Hashknife.

"Your boss?" he says, foolish-like.

"The lady you followed out of town."

"Oh!"

He looks us over for a moment and then says, kinda soft-like—

"That lady your boss?"

"Uh-huh. Where is she?"

"I don't know. My horse fell with me and strained its shoulder. When I got up she was gone."

"You tellin' the truth?" asks Hashknife.

Snag Thorn's eyes got real narrow and he studies Hashknife. Then he says—

"You don't know me very well, do yuh?"

"He ain't no liar," says Windy; "Snag Thorn ain't."

"Much obliged, Woods," says Snag Thorn.

"Excuse me," says Hashknife. "That was a danged fool thing to say, Thorn. Yuh see I was kinda excited. The sheriff arrested her and then things happened in town and we didn't find her at the ranch."

"Yeah, I know," says Snag, kinda weary-like. "I didn't know she was your boss, and I didn't know she had a gun, but I saw Peeler reach for his gun, so I cut down on him. The sheriff started after her but I cut him back to the main herd, and then I seen that her horse was running away with her. Peeler must 'a' had hold of the bridle-reins and when her horse yanked back the head-stall busted."

"My ——!" gasps Windy. "She's ridin' without a bridle? Which way did she go?"

"North," says Snag. "The last I seen of her she was goin' toward Devil's Dooryard, and then my bronc turned a somersault. When I got straightened out she had disappeared."

"It'll be dark before we can get there," says Hashknife. "That bronc she is ridin' will go hawg-wild without a bridle, —— him! Mebbe he won't buck, but he—aw, shucks!"

Just then Blondy, Bowers and the sheriff comes in sight. They rides slow-like up to us, looking like they was expectin' trouble. Snag Thorn leans against the doorway and looks at them. Then he says to the sheriff—

"Come to get me for shootin' Peeler?"

The sheriff looks us all over and then back at Snag.

"Didn't know you shot him, Snag; thought it was the female."

"I shot him," states Snag coolly. "I'll ask yuh—what did yuh arrest the lady for, sheriff?"

Hack Allen wets his lips, rubs his sore jaw and rests his hands on his saddle-horn.

"She's the boss of the Circle Dot, ain't she? Two of your men have been shot on the Circle Dot Range, ain't they? They been stealin' your——"

"Period!" snaps Hashknife. "You're goin' to hold your breath too long some of these days, Allen, and you'll never get it again."

"I'll ask yuh for help when I need yuh, Allen," says Snag.

"Yeah? Your dead-line didn't seem to stop the Circle Dot."

"Hack," says Snag, "you better go back to your office and let my business alone. Yuh might lock your door, too—if yuh want to play safe."

"I'll run my office, *sabe?* Neither you nor this bunch of gun-packers from the Circle Dot can tell me where to head in at. You try takin' the law into your own hands and see how quick yuh get tripped up."

Snag shrugs his shoulders and turns to Hashknife.

"What do yuh aim to do, Hartley?"

"Clean up this rotten range," says Hashknife. "Would yuh mind tellin' me what this Baldy person was doin' in the Devil's Dooryard the day he got shot?"

"Lookin' for Bar 20 stock."

"—— of a place to look for stock!" says Bowers.

"A cow don't make tracks in there," says Hashknife, thoughtful-like.

"Feller'd have to see the cow, I reckon."

"What do yuh mean?" asks Snag. "Baldy raved about seein' cows in that place, but he was out of his head."

"The Circle Dot has lost a lot of cows, and there ain't no —— speakin' of deadlines, Thorn; you've got yours pretty well organized. I started over here the other day, and as I crossed the Cow Crick I got two bullets in my saddle. Yuh sure do protect your rights."

"Did, eh?" Snag looks off across the hills, like he was thinking real fast.

"I've lost a lot of cows," complains Bowers. "Jist vanished."

"This range needs cleanin' up," opines Hashknife, "and it's time to get busy. I ain't accusin' the Bar 20, Thorn. I think that Baldy was lookin' for somethin' in the right place. The Bar 20 is welcome to ride the Circle Dot from now on. *Sabe?* If the answer is on the Circle Dot Range—find it."

"Where yuh goin' now?" asked the sheriff.

"Goin' to find the lady first," says Hashknife, "and after that I'm goin' to give you a few prisoners to feed, or a job for the coroner."

"I'll run my office!" snaps the sheriff, but Hashknife looks weary-like at him and then turns away.

WE WENT out of there and headed for the home ranch. Bowers rides with us as far as his place and then swings into his own gate. We didn't do any talkin' and he, for once in his life, didn't harp about losing cows. It's dark when we reach the ranch, but Mary Jane hasn't showed up yet. Sing gives us a bite to eat and then we changed horses and hit into the hills toward Devil's Dooryard. There's a big moon coming over the hills. Not one of them flat-looking moons, but one what is round, like a big yaller ball hanging up there.

Sudden-like, Hashknife stops his horse and points toward the moon. Along a jagged ridge above us, sharp-cut against the moon, appears a figure on a horse. It's there for several seconds, and then passes on.

"Mary Jane!" gasps Windy.

"Not unless she's twins," grunts Hashknife, as another mounted figure passes between us and the moon.

"The danged fools!" grunts Hashknife.

"Well who do yuh reckon it is?" asks Windy, but Hashknife don't reply. He swings his horse and we rides up the hill, angling to try and cut the trail of the two horsemen. It's plumb dark and going is tough. We has to angle all over that hill to get to the top, and when we get there we ain't no better off, as far as I can see.

Hashknife swings off his horse and ties it to a scrub-pine. Me and Windy follers suit and then we all slips our Winchesters loose.

"Now that we're all assembled, Hashknife, yuh might tell us whyfor and which," states Windy, peering off into that jumble of fantastic-looking rocks.

"I dunno," admits Hashknife. "I've just got a hunch."

"He's just got a hunch, Windy," says I. "Hashknife's like a lot of other jaspers what ain't got no brains—he has hunches. What does your pet hunch say to yuh, Mister Hartley?"

"Hook on to your rifle and try to keep your big feet from rollin' rocks," grunts Hashknife, and we goes sneaking off across the Devil's Dooryard in the dark.

"I'd like to know where I'm goin'," says I. "This here business of packin' a rifle and hobblin' over——"

Just then I got my toe caught between two rocks and I sprawled flat on my face. I throwed my rifle about ten feet away and the danged thing went off. We can hear that old .45-70 echo from all points of the compass. There ain't a word said for a while, and then Windy says:

"Yuh hadn't ought to have a gun, Sleepy. Honest to gosh, yuh hadn't. Next time we'll give yuh a fish-pole."

"No," says Hashknife, sad-like; "no fish-pole, Windy. Give him a toy balloon."

"He'd likely pinch it and then she'd bust," objects Windy.

"I couldn't help it," says I. "I fell. The gun must 'a' struck on the hammer. I can't get my toe loose."

"Can't get loose?" grunts Hashknife. "Stuck fast, Sleepy?"

"Tighter 'n a wedge."

"Fine! Come on, Windy. We'll leave him where he'll stay put."

Know what them two wallopers done? Well, they went away and left me, that's what they done. After twisting my toe half-off, I discovers that I can lift my foot out of my boot without no trouble, the same of which gives me both hands to unfasten that trapped boot. Then I got my rifle and blunders ahead in the dark about ten minutes behind Hashknife and Windy. I don't know where they went. I know I must 'a' been Injuning along pretty skookum, 'cause I almost stumbled over a cougar. Mister Cougar gives one despairing yelp, and fades away among the rocks, while old man Stevens' son climbed up on a pinnacle of rocks and perspired freely.

Just in below me is a deep cañon, winding around among the rocks. Every danged thing looks kinda blue and silver-like. The moon ain't climbed up high enough to light up things much, and I lays there in the edge of that pinnacle, trying to assemble enough tobacco to make a cigaret.

All to once I hears the squeak of saddle-leather and I spills the tobacco. I listens some more and hears it again. Then I lays down and peers into the cañon and I sees something. Ghosts! Honest to grandma, I got a bird's-eye view of two riders, passing along without a sound, and all to once they fades out. They can't be more than fifty feet below me, and their horses don't make a sound on that rocky floor.

"Sleepy," says I. "You've plumb seen a ghost!" And then I says to myself, "You're a liar, 'cause ghost-saddles don't squeak."

Then I stand up and looks around, and across from me, against the sky-line I sees a man. There's only one way to find out whether he's friend or foe, and that is to kill him.

I lifts my rifle against the light of the sky and tries to notch my sights. Then I took my rifle down, lays her on a rock and goes on without it. I reckon it must 'a' hit a rock when I fell, 'cause the front sight has been knocked plumb off, and I ain't like some fellers that can shoot a rifle by the sense of smell. I sneaks along, using every sense I've got, and all to once something tells me to stop.

I stands there for about two minutes, still as possible, and then I hears Windy's voice whisper:

"I dunno, —— it! If it moves again I'll take a chance."

"It ain't goin' to," says I.

"Got loose, did yuh?" asks Hashknife.

"No," says I; "I dragged the whole —— mountain over with me. Did yuh see the ghosts? I knocked the sight off my rifle."

"What ghosts?" asks Windy, and then I told 'em about the two riders I seen in the cañon.

"Think he's lying, Hashknife?" asks Windy.

"No-o-o-o. Ridin' barefooted horses, with gunny-sacks mufflin' their hoofs. Went up the cañon, Sleepy?"

"I think so. I shook hands with a cougar about a minute before and maybe my compass was out of order."

"But where in —— is Mary Jane?" says Windy, complaining-like. "All this time we ain't findin' her a-tall."

"Yuh might do like they do in hotels," says Hashknife; "start off up the Devil's Dooryard, yellin' 'Mary Jane! Mary Jane Haley! Windy Woods wants Mary Jane Haley!'"

"*Sh-h-h-h!*" hisses Windy.

We listens. Pretty soon we hear somebody walkin' soft-like. Then silence.

"My ——!" whispers Windy. "What do yuh reckon that was—ghosts?"

From 'way up the hill comes the rattle of a couple of shots. They must be a quarter of a mile away. Then we hears somebody grunt; comes the rattle of gravel, and then we hears somebody running.

"Come on," says Hashknife, "but for —— sake, go easy. There's too danged much shooting going on to suit me. Look out—here comes a horse!"

Over the top of a saw-tooth ridge jerks a horse. For a second or two it's outlined against the light of the sky and then it goes rattling off across the rocks.

"That's my horse!" exploded Hashknife. "Mary Jane is a-foot! Come on!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three distinct shots split the night and rattle among the rocks.

"Six-shooter," gasps Hashknife, stumbling. "I wish the devil would clean up his yard!"

We staggers along, cutting our feet on the sharp rocks and praying that it will be light enough to shoot when we meet somebody to shoot at. All to once we hits the edge of that deep cañon. There ain't no warning. I feels my feet slip into some loose stuff, so I grabs hold of Windy.

I hears Hashknife speak an unlovely word, and then me and Windy starts doing a toboggan to the bottom. It wasn't straight down, but I'd just as soon fall as to set down in that loose stuff and get all heated up doing a slide for life.

WE LANDED in the bottom with about a ton of loose stuff, composed mostly of glassy gravel and other sharp-pointed particles. I got the dust out of my mouth, and I orates openly that we've lost Hashknife.

That operation caused a bullet to *flup* into our private landslide.

"Mebbe you'll keep your mouth shut," says Hashknife's voice.

"How'd yuh get there?" I asks.

"Sittin' down, yuh —— fool!"

"Oh," says Windy, taking a few deep breaths, "I'm all worn off from my belt to my knees. Who is shootin' at us, I'd love to awsk?"

Then we seen the flash of the next shot and the bullet threw dust into my face. I reckon our six-shooters cracked at the same time and then we fell all over each other trying to change positions. I bumped into Hashknife and we both fell over Windy.

"Don't get excited," begs Hashknife. "That —— fool up there couldn't hit us with a shotgun—unless it was a mistake."

"Mistakes has killed a lot of good men," wails Windy. "I don't want to be no accidental corpse. Let's go and find Mary Jane Haley. We're wastin' a lot of good time, don't yuh know it? Come on."

"Well, who is shooting at us?" I asks. "Hashknife Hartley, if yuh know, tell us, will yuh?"

"Merely a surmise, Sleepy, but I think I'm right. Felt all along that I had the answer, but I wasn't sure until tonight."

"Fine!" grunts Windy. "Go ahead and tell us."

"Let's get under cover and wait for daylight."

"While our li'l boss wanders around this God-forsaken place in the dark?" asks Windy. "I'm goin' out and find her."

"All right," says Hashknife, "go ahead. I've got a hunch that somebody'll lead yuh up a heap if yuh climb any farther, but it's your business, Windy."

"Who'd lead me up?"

"Tell yuh tomorrow—or, I reckon I'd better say, today. Must be gettin' toward mornin'."

A deer came along after while, and if Hashknife hadn't grabbed my arm I'd a took a shot at it. I thought it was a man with a white pack on his back. It sure was sneaking along mysterious-like. My nerves had got to a frazzled state. I ain't brave. Nope—not when it's so danged dark that I can't see which way to run.

After while it begins to get lighter and the old moon begins to lose a lot of his yaller. Down the hill a cougar rises his voice in sorrow and wo, and far away we hears the nicker of a horse.

"I can see to notch my sights," announces Hashknife, after while, "and I reckon I can recognize a friend as far as I can hit anything. Let's go."

"Who do we shoot at?" I asks. "Any preference, Hashknife?"

"I reckon they'll show their hand, Sleepy. Keep your danged head down."

"Whose danged head is this? Yuh won't tell anything, and yuh crabs when a feller wants to see something for himself. What for kind of a way is that to act? Are we with yuh, or just one of your party?"

"I wants to find Mary Jane first of all," says Windy, sad-like. "I'm gettin' worried."

"Yeah, and get wrinkled like a Siwash squaw," grunts Hashknife. "Whoa, Blaze!"

Hashknife points at a jumble of rocks farther up on the hill. We sees the figure of a man, humped over, crawling along like a big lizard. Comes the *whang* of a gun, and the man collapses in the rocks. But he ain't dead. We sees him shoot twice, and then he drops lower and begins crawling.

"Shall I wing him?" asks Windy.

"Nope," grunts Hashknife. "Dunno who he is yet. Got a idea, but ain't sure."

"This is a lot of fun for us, Sleepy," says Windy. "The general won't let us privates shoot until he sees the whites of their eyes."

We sneaked along behind boulders, working up higher all the time. I ain't got no knees left in my pants, the same of which makes 'em match in front and rear. We rounds the corner of a pinnacle, and Hashknife stops.

"I'm foreman of the Circle Dot," says Windy, peevish-like, "and I do admire to know why they comes up here and shoots up my nice li'l rocks. Goin' to put up signs today, warnin' folks to keep off my grass, y'betcha."

I sticks my head over the top.

Zowie! A bullet *spings* off the rock beside my ear and goes buzzing off down among the cliffs.

"Next time I go out with you, Sleepy, I'm goin' t' pack a spade," says Hashknife. "You sure does invite interment."

We hugs the rocks for a while, and then peers out again.

Splat! A bullet flattens right beside my ear and I slides back.

Then I scratches my ear, looks at the lead spatter on the rock and cusses some more.

"We-e-e-ell," drawls Hashknife, grinning, "I reckon you'll get sensible now. That only misses by six inches. Huh!"

Hashknife rolls over, pokes into a rock crevice, and begins to climb. It's only about seven feet to the top of the rock, and me and Windy stays there looking up at the soles of his boots. He stops. We sees him kinda anchor his knee against the side of the rock and then his rifle sings its little song. A empty shell rattles down at us and we hears him chuckle. Then he slides down to us and huddles down.

"Ketchum bad-man," he grunts, stuffing another shell into the magazine of his rifle.

"Didja hit him?" asks Windy.

"If I didn't, he must be a danged fool to upset the way he did."

Spo-o-o-w! A bullet burned across my shoulder and whizzed into the air off the rock behind me. I dropped flat and remembered every cuss word I ever heard.

"And I raised him, Windy," says Hashknife when I runs out of breath.

"I've learned his meek and mildness, but the minute the —— fool gets mad he backslides. Didja ever hear such language? Awful! I hates to see anybody kill him, 'cause his soul won't be welcome nowheres."

"He ain't got none," declares Windy. "No soul a-tall, Hashknife, but, man, man, he sure has a memory for words."

"Burnt me right across the shoulder," says I. "Stay here and get killed if you must, but I'm goin' to smoke that *hombre* out. *Sabe?*"

"We've got to find Mary Jane," says Windy. "All this time——"

"We'll find her," says Hashknife. "I figure she ain't far away."

WE CRAWLS over the top of them rocks, out through the fissure and slides down the other side. Then we crawls on our hands, knees and belly until our shirts are on a par with our knees and seats. We reaches the other side of the hill and angles through the rocks, until we're working around behind a sort of cliff. Then a danged rattlesnake has to plant himself right in our trail. Ornery son of a gun wouldn't budge and we didn't want to shoot him for fear of letting folks know where we were.

There wasn't a loose rock in reach, so Hashknife takes off his belt, slips his holster off and then he slams Mr. Snake with the buckle-end. It sure was effective. Windy collects the rattles as we go past. We gets almost around the cliff and then gets to our feet and peers around.

"Got to get up higher," whispers Hashknife. "I reckon we can climb this end of the cliff."

We crawls to the top and finds that it's still lower than the main part of the cliff, but between us and the high part is about fifty feet of open country. We thought it was cliff all the way, and here we are up on kind of a table-rock. We peers around.

"Look!" croaks Windy.

There's a man crawling along the base of the higher cliff. Windy lifts his rifle and lines his sights, but Hashknife pushes the gun aside.

"That's Snag Thorn!" grits Windy.

"Lemme nail him, Hashknife. Dirty rustler."

"Betcha the whole gang are scattered around here," says I.

"Wait a minute," cautions Hashknife. "Plenty of time to kill him."

"My ——! Look!" wails Windy. "There's Mary Jane!"

We gets a glimpse of her on the side of that cliff, beyond the angle of where Snag Thorn is crawling, and she's coming down. We can see her plain for a moment and then she goes down behind the angle of the rocks.

"Snag's sneaking up on her!" gasps Windy. "The dirty pup!"

"——!" grunts Hashknife. "He likely don't know she's anywhere near here. Watch up the hill. Keep looking up toward where Snag is going."

The three of us searches every sign on the side of the hill and all to once Windy says:

"I see a man. See that V-shaped pinnacle, with the point stickin' out the side? Look right in below that. See him? Look—he's movin' around!"

Hashknife's rifle jerks to his shoulder and shoots twice.

"My ——!" yelps Windy. "You've hit him! Some shootin'!"

"Come on," snaps Hashknife.

We went down off that rock like three squirrels and went ducking and dodging straight for where we seen Snag, but there ain't a bullet coming our way. We're halfway across to the rock when we hears a gun, but Hashknife don't stop.

The three of us went around the corner of that cliff, and there stands Snag Thorn with his back to us, and he's nursing his right hand. Against the side of the cliff stands Mary Jane, her hair hanging down, her hat gone and her dress is all torn and dirty. Her face is as white as chalk, and I thought she might 'a' got hit. Neither of them sees us, although Snag ain't twenty feet away.

Then Snag says:

"I thought it was you. I seen yuh in town—just a glimpse, but I remembered yuh, and when your horse ran away with yuh——"

"Oh!" says Mary Jane, "I w-wish I hadn't shot you—I—I——"

"I tried to find yuh in Frisco," says Snag. "I lost the address and I— But it don't matter, I reckon."

Snag looks down at his hand.

"Yuh see the Circle Dot says I'm a rustler and my dad and your uncle killed each other, and—I'll help yuh get home safe, Miss Haley—if your men won't fill me full of lead on my way out."

"Have they been shooting at you?" she asks and he nods.

"Did you or your men shoot at me?"

"I came alone—and I didn't shoot at you."

"I thought it was your men," says she. "I—I—that horse ran away with me and brought me up here. I was afraid to get off but after a while it stopped and I got off, and—and I didn't have any bridle and I couldn't catch it again.

"It got dark and I climbed up on top of the cliff and in the night I saw two men on horses ride past. I was afraid to call to them, but as I followed them—or rather went the way they did and heard them talking—I almost ran into them. There's a cave up there, and they were talking something about somebody getting suspicious and about cow-tracks, and one of them said the best thing they could do was to either bluff it out or fight it out.

"I heard my name mentioned and Mr. Hartley's, and—and I thought it was some of your men, and then one of them said: 'Let's bunch it. Nobody will ever know where we went, and they'll never find this place in a thousand years.' "

"A cave?" asks Snag. "Up here?"

"Yes. It's big enough to ride a horse into. One of the men said: 'This sure has been easy pickings for us, but I made a big mistake when I missed that Hashknife person. He's got too much *sabe*.' And then the other one said: 'Yes, you went too strong, I guess, and didn't shoot straight enough.'

"I don't know just what happened then, but I must have touched a loose rock, because it fell and made a lot of noise. I ran behind the rock and they went past me. Then I crept to the side of the hill, but they saw me and shot at me. I just remembered that I still had a gun and I shot. I don't think I hit anybody and then I managed to get here and climb up on that rock. I—I think they shot several times at me, but it all seemed like nightmare, and then I—I shot at you."

"So did they," said Snag, foolish-like.

MARY JANE leans back against the rock and begins to weep. I starts to go over to her but Hashknife yanks me back. Snag walks over to her and pats her on the shoulder, kinda bashful-like, and says:

"Gosh, don't do that! I'm all right and you found the place where they drifted all those cows, and we'll find the rustlers."

"Bub-but I shot you," wails Mary Jane. "I—I don't know how I happened to hit you. You saved my life that n-night in San Francisco, and I wanted to th-thank you, but I shot——"

"Aw, that's all right," says Snag, foolish-like. "You can shoot me any old time yuh feel like it."

Wasn't that a —— of a thing for a growed-up man to say?

"Duck!" says Hashknife, and the three of us went down like prairie-dogs when a hawk shows up.

"What was it?" whispers Windy, cocking his gun.

"Arrows," says Hashknife, and then he takes me by the arm and leads me away, with Windy sneaking along behind.

Hashknife takes us 'way down among the rocks and then stops.

"Arrows?" asks Windy. "Whatcha mean?"

Just then we sees Mary Jane and Snag come down around the side of the cliff. They stops and looks off across the country, and then they starts off down among the rocks, and Snag and Mary Jane are hanging on to each other's hand.

"Arrows?" asks Windy again.

"Cupid," explains Hashknife. "Little feller, who don't wear no pants. Shoots a bow and arrow."

"You're loco," grunts Windy, and then we follers Hashknife up to where we saw the man spill into the rocks. Windy looks at Hashknife, but don't say a word, and then we went down and helped Hashknife find the other one.

"My ——!" says Windy. "Did yuh know who they was, Hashknife?"

"Sure. I had a good idea right off the reel, but I wasn't sure until I got shot at down on Cow Crick, after I told Bowers I was goin' over to the Bar 20. Did you ever hear of that cave?"

"Nope," replies Windy. "I don't reckon anybody ever cared to pesticate around up there, 'cause I never heard there was any caves."

"There had to be a way out," states Hashknife. "I reckon that old crater must run plumb through into Bluff Lake Valley, and they runs a few head of steers through at a time. Likely run in a few at a time and held them up in the rocks until they has enough to make a drive. I knowed the answer was up here, 'cause Baldy got shot here, and somebody bawled him out for bein' on Circle Dot Range. They kept the two ranches fightin' each other, while they stole from both."

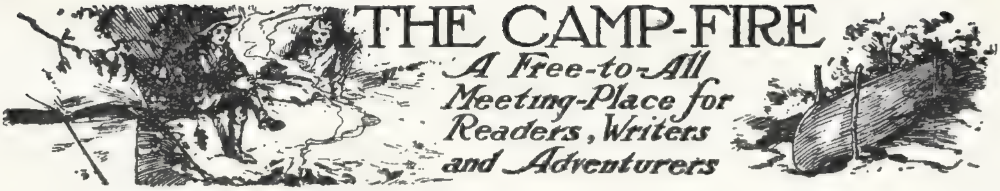
"I wonder," says Windy, sad-like. "I wonder if Snag and Mary Jane——"

"Kinda looks thataway," nods Hashknife.

"And the sheriff's office ain't got no keeper and Blubber won't ever have to get his adenoids cut out," says I.

"Well," says Windy, "I reckon it's all right for Snag to get Mary Jane. I like her fine, yuh understand. Yeah, I like her better than any girl I ever seen, but she's too danged good for me. I—I never said anythin' to her—never intended to, yuh understand? Why, if she was to ask me to marry her I'd have to refuse. Yessir, I'd have to. What would you do in a case like that, Hashknife?"

"Just like you would, you —— liar," says Hashknife, and we went down through the Devil's Dooryard without further comment.



THE CAMP-FIRE

A Free-to-All Meeting-Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

IF THIS magazine can help in getting together the Americans who fought under the Canadian flag in the Great War it will be glad to do what it can. Here is one of them looking for the others:

Butte, Montana.

I have been thinking for some time past what a grand idea it would be if all the Yanks who fought with Canada in the late war could get together, not necessarily in person, but through some such medium as *Adventure*.

There are thousands of these men, and I, for one, should enjoy running across the name of some former "bunkie."

THE American Legion with the Canadians is now called "The Lost Battalion," but a lot of these men have seen over three years' service with other Canadian units, principally the following: P. P. C. L. I; R. C. R's; and the 38th C. E. F.

The Brigade known at one time as the American Legion was formed the latter part of 1915 by Col. Bullock, organizing the 97th Battalion. Later four other Battalions were organized, consisting of the 211th, 212th, 213th and 237th who were all brought together in two separate drafts, the 97th, 212th, 237th going to England as the 97th in September, 1917.

Americans winning the much coveted Victoria Cross numbered, I believe, 8, one of which went with the 97th as Dr. Hutchinsen.

It has been the writer's good fortune to soldier with one of the Americans who won the V. C., a man named Mullen from Portland, Oregon, originally and I might add that he was some little single-handed fighter.

IF I am not crowding you too much for space I would like you to inquire for the following men for me: Lt. Rob., P. P. C. L. I.; "Paddy" Diamond, who by the way was a one-eyed man who fooled them all for some time and was also an ex-U. S. Army man of some fifteen or twenty years' service. Also any one wanting to know the particulars about the death of Jack Burke at Vimy I can give them. Would like to hear from any U. S. 2nd Batt., 27th or 28th Regt. of Inf. man who knows the particulars of Major Rasmussen's death. This major transferred to the American forces from the P. P. C. L. I. —F. E. W.

HOW about this? I'll venture some of you do know about ju-jitsu—the real thing, not the book sort. I don't, but personally I'm very respectful to the book sort, even if Comrade Phelps isn't. Once a friend and I were trying out some of the stunts from a book. With our eyes on the book we arranged ourselves according to directions and then he gave a heave, a very little one. It was supposed to send me up in the air if vigorously applied, so he didn't apply it vigorously—just sort of a little hunch. But I went up in the air just the same and kept on going till my head met the ceiling. He was smaller than I was, too, but I didn't hold that against him for I came down on him and he was big enough for that. But we both cut out book ju-jitsu then and there and played it safe on wrestling, football and such where we could make some kind of guess as to what would happen when some one heaved some one else

Union Hill, New Jersey.

I do not see the subject of which I am writing classified in "Ask Adventure" but as I have seen the subject mentioned between the magazine covers, with enough hints for me to recognize some old tricks, I'd like to refer this to some one who might give me a little dope.

I mean Ju-Jitsu. No, I don't intend to beat up a cop or anything. I happen to be acquainted with a professional wrestler, and from him and some of his pals have learned quite a little about the so called gentle art—enough to know the real from the spurious—and find that it works in quite well in catch-as-catch-can, to which, as an amateur, I have long been addicted.

There seems to be no one in this country who knows much about the real thing, and I can tell at a glance what would happen to any one who tried some of this book "Ju" on me.

This may be out of your line, but anyway I'll be grateful for any information you can give me.—Austin H. Phelps.

TO NO one does Camp-Fire listen more carefully than to one of the West's real old-timers, and there is not one of them who has talked to us that has not been well worth listening to. The following seems particularly interesting and makes the old-timers seem to live again:

Chloride, Arizona.

I happen to come of old pioneer stock, born in California sixty years ago, and my life has been spent on the frontier. Commencing as a rider, my early life was that of the "*vaquero*," or as they were called, Cow Boys in Texas, which name is commonly applied to that class to-day.

My father before me was a famous horseman, a pioneer stockman, hence my apprenticeship in the saddle—later I took to prospecting and mining and am still in that vocation.

AS I was through Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas all my life, I knew considerable about some of the frontier characters, both personally or by reputation, while they were yet performing their stunts.

It is singular how so little is known generally of some of these characters whose biographies are written up and published and may be still had in book form. I have seen several such books.

The first record we got of Kit Carson on the Plains he was just a boy in one of my great uncle's expeditions to California back before the Mexican war—the pioneer of pioneers, Capt. Levi Scott.

AS TO Wild Bill, he was a natural-born fighter, a brave man and a good officer—a tall, blond, good-looking man. He came to fame for killing off the McKendlas gang of bandits single handed, seven of them. He was a hostler or station tender on Ben Holiday's Overland Stage Route. They came along to strip the station of its horses and Hicock refused to surrender and made ready to defend the station. They broke in the door and it was a hand-to-hand fight. Bill emptied his two rifles, old muzzle-loaders, and his five Colt six-shooters and finished up with his sheath-knife—it was in his mention of the battle he got his sobriquet of "Wild." He said, "Then I drew my knife and just went wild and cut and slashed right and left."

It was perhaps Wild Bill's method of using six-shooters that eventualized the double-action revolver. Bill took the trigger out of his guns and fired them entirely with his thumbs. One in each hand. He shot equally well right or left handed or both hands at a time. Most of the men he killed later were killed by him as an officer.

AS TO Billy the Kid there is little to commend him. Positively he was just a cold-blooded man-killer with little in his character to admire. An outlaw pure and simple. He was raised in Silver City, New Mexico, as a boy. A light haired, freckled faced kid who killed a negro just for fun before he was 15 years of age. If my memory serves me right his parents were Irish and his real name was Antrum, but in this I am a little hazy. The writer was a constable and deputy sheriff in southeast New Mexico along the Pecos River in 1885 on the ground made famous by the Kid, who was killed, I think, in '81. Anyway, his exploits were fresh in the memory of the inhabitants at that time. I lodged prisoners in the jail at Lincoln where he made a spectacular escape after killing two deputies of Sheriff Pat Garrett. In all, he killed 17 men.

SEVENTEEN men seems to be the limit reached by men-killers. The old plains desperado Slade killed 17; so did Ben Tompson of Texas; and I think these three hold the limit sure. Slade was lynched in Virginia City by Vigilantes in the '60's and Tompson was shot to death in the White Elephant Theater in San Antonio, Texas, in '83. Billy the Kid was killed at Old Fort Sumner, not at Reswell as Baxter Adams says. Reswell was not built yet in my time there in '85. Fort Sumner was in the Maxwell Grant up toward Las Vegas.

Maxwell had married a Mexican lady and left two children, Pete and Kate, who owned the Grant at that time, the elder Maxwell being dead. The Kid had killed Kate's sweetheart and she set out deliberately to trap him. She got him to visit her, and then notified Pat Garrett, sheriff, of a date she had made with him.

GARRETT was on hand with his picked deputies, for know you it was with Garrett to take him dead. No chances to be taken. He quietly surrounded the house and posted his men, took off his boots and slipped into Pete Maxwell's room to ascertain if the Kid was there and what part of the house he would be found in. While Garrett was down on his knees whispering to Pete, the Kid opened a door that led into the room from a room adjoining which had a light in it. He advanced with his pistol in his hand, saw Garrett, but, as it was dark, could not tell who it was, pointed his finger at him and asked in Spanish, "Who is that?" just as Garrett's six-shooter went off and killed him.

Shooting in a dark room is very risky business, Garrett says. "He had the light behind him. I drew my revolver sideways until his body shut off the light from the barrel and pulled." It was a .45 cal. The Kid was one of the first desperadoes to use the Colt .41 double-action revolver.

GARRETT was Captain of John Chisholm's company of men in the Old Lincoln County cattle war when it was Chisholm against the small stockmen, and the Kid was one of the men under Garrett. They knew each other well.

One thing, Garrett was a fearless man. He fought the Kid several times. Captured him once, and he escaped several times from him. Garrett was one of the best officers the West ever had. A real fighter and fearless. In that country he was highly esteemed for honesty and courage. My personal acquaintance with Mr. Garrett is to have met him just once, and he did me a small favor unasked for, which I will ever remember kindly. It was in his old county I acted as a constable and deputy, but after he was out of the sheriff's office, and under his successor, John M. Poe. Those were real Simon pure frontier times.—JNO. L. RIGGS.

WILL those few of you who do not like W. C. Tuttle's humorous stories please read the following? It contains a bit of news for you.

I estimate that some ninety per cent. of you would go on strike at once if W. C. Tuttle's stories no longer appeared in our magazine. The remaining ten per cent. or five per cent. or two per cent. don't happen to be reached by "Tut's" brand of humor. May I call to the attention of these few the fact that Mr. Tuttle has begun writing straight Western fiction, in which humor plays a very minor part? Try this one.

Here are the facts from which part of it was built:

I wrote the local color of this tale from a location in Montana, which we always called the "Big Blowout." Of all the prospectors, hunters, etc., that have pesticated around that country I think I am the only one ever to find the cave.

It was the remains of an old crater, which seemed to have separated from a common center and blown out both sides of the mountain, making a cave all the way through wide enough to allow a man to walk through. There was no trail, and the sharp rocks made hard walking. Both ends were masked from above and below, and I always thought it would make an ideal place to hide out if the sheriff ever got peeved at me.

The idea of an outsider keeping up a feud between two outfits was really done in Montana, although there were no killings, and the outsider died a few years ago with his boots off.—TUT.

JUST yesterday I answered a letter from one of our old aviator comrades of the Great War days, now Jefe de Aviacion of one of the Central American countries, and to-day, getting ready "copy" for the printer, I draw out of our Camp-Fire cache the following from a comrade in Colombia. It was written well back in 1920 and later in that year Mr. Martin dropped in at the office and I had a very pleasant talk with him. His letter is none the less interesting because of the lapse of time since it was written. I wish we could reproduce the photograph.

Incidentally, I suggested to the Central American aviator and to our old friend Dr. William C. Robertson of Honduras that they ought to know each other if by any chance the former goes flying around the latter's part of C. A. If they get together, they ought to send Camp-Fire a joint report.

Medellin, Colombia, S. A.

I have been down in this country for about ten months doing exhibition flying and pioneering aviation in general, with the hopes of arousing enthusiasm enough to start a company for the purpose of mail and passenger carrying from the coast as far as Bogota, which is about 700 miles in the interior. In this I have been partly successful and in six months' time I hope to have things going full swing.

AS YOU doubtless know, the only means of transportation from the coast into the interior of Colombia is the Magdalena River. As a rule, during the rainy season when the river is in flood it takes about eight or nine days to come from Barranquilla, on the coast, to Bogota, the capital. But during the dry season, such as we are having at present, it takes anywhere from ten to twenty-five days. This is due to boats being stuck on mud-bars, etc. Even in the rainy season passengers coming up the river are subject to all sorts of inconveniences and almost invariably get fever in one form or other. When I get my stunt going down here we will be flying from Barranquilla to Medellin and on to Bogota in one day. Some improvement, eh?

From Barranquilla to Medellin is 350 miles in a straight line and from Medellin to Bogota is 150 in straight line. The type of machine we will use will be equipped with three motors of 150 horse power each. The machine will carry pilot and mechanic and eight passengers and will have a speed of 107 miles per hour. It will also carry about 100 pounds extra, which will be reserved for mail. Our company has the Government mail contract (probationary) for one year which begun Jan. 1, 1920. If we make good we get it for ten years.

THE machine I have with me is a small exhibition machine, but, believe me, she has done some wonderful work considering how she has been shipped around the country and the rough, primitive methods of handling she has been subjected to. She is a very historic machine, that is, as far as Colombian history goes. She is the first aeroplane in Colombia to carry a passenger—Barranquilla, July 1st, 1919; passenger, Mario Santa Domingo. Carry mail, Barranquilla—Puerta Colombia, July 7, 1919. Special official stamp is issued.

Fly in Bogota after two previous unsuccessful attempts? The difficulty in flying in Bogota is that Bogota is almost 10,000 ft. above sea level. I made five successful flights in Bogota. August 11, 1919.

It is the first aeroplane to carry a woman passenger in Colombia—Senora Angela Moure de Alford. Flew over Giradot for about thirty minutes.

It is the first aeroplane to make a cross-country flight in Colombia from town to town. I flew from Giradot to Ibague, twenty miles of the distance being over solid mountains without a single landing-place possible anywhere. Carried a passenger and my pet tiger, "Aero," on the trip. The clipping I am enclosing was taken just after my landing in Ibague. The chap standing by me at the machine was my passenger, and "Aero," the flying tiger, is in my lap. They have a railroad from Giradot to Ibague over which it takes nine and one-half hours to make the trip. I made it in about forty-five minutes.

THE photos I am enclosing were taken just before my last exhibition flight in Medellin. The *Adventure* was given me by a chap I met here who is with the Tropical Oil Company and who has been in the brush for the past four months. He says that magazines are continually being brought in to the oil company's various camps and a good percentage of them are *Adventure*. In my jumps about this country as well as others I have visited (and some of the pretty far-out-of-the-way-places) I have almost always run across a copy of "our magazine."

Well, I guess I will ring off as I know of nothing else that would be of interest.—W. KNOX MARTIN.

HERE is an amusing and interesting thing. Several of you wrote in saying that Charles Beadle's novelette, "The Bowl of Alabaster," showed strong signs of having borrowed much of its material and setting from another story. Though no one could remember just what the other story was, one or two mentioned some of Haggard's tales. While we here in the office could not detect any plagiarism and had never had any reason to suspect Mr. Beadle of plagiarism, we of course forwarded the letters to him.

Mr. Beadle promptly explained the "mystery." He had "plagiarized" all right, in a way of speaking, but quite legitimately and from *his own work*. The setting and material of the story were naturally somewhat the same as in his earlier story, for "The Bowl of Alabaster" was a sequel to "The Alabaster Goddess." Also, the sequel was written at my suggestion, which makes me all the more to blame for not having made plain in the magazine beyond any possible misunderstanding that the second story was a sequel to one published quite a number of issues earlier.

WE DID get badly caught by a plagiarist last year and some fifty of you called our attention to it. And I thank every one of the fifty for doing so. Every magazine gets victimized in this way and naturally, while it isn't pleasant news to receive, finding out about it is the necessary first step toward doing anything about it.

That is, I thank all but two or three of the fifty. These two or three at once wrote me down as a cold-blooded crook and, without waiting to give me a hearing or any chance at self-defense, proceeded to call me all the names in the calendar. A man like that is not only a .22 caliber rim-fire short but, well, he's shy on common-sense. Even if I were as much a crook as they said, I am not idiot enough to do a thing like that. Nor is any other editor of any other magazine of any standing. There is nothing to be gained for a magazine by plagiarism, and a great deal to be lost by it.

Also, this magazine has been demonstrating for more than ten years that it is entirely able to get all the original stories it needs. But these two or three half-cocked little toy pistols exploded without stopping to think of any of these things.

I don't mind saying that I had personally read the story plagiarized by ours, but that was twenty or twenty-five years ago. I've read many, many thousands of stories since then and it is not surprising that I didn't recognize the plot when transferred to another country and another age.

I DO not give the plagiarist's name. He seemed to me foolish and careless rather than a crook. He has made every possible atonement, feels the disgrace bitterly, and I'm willing to bet will never offend again. To brand him by name publicly will ruin his life as a man, and he has good standing in his community and can be useful there. Ordinarily I have no use or mercy for a plagiarist, but in this case I don't feel I am all-wise enough to be justified in ruining his life by exposure. Maybe I'm doing wrong, but when a man who has fallen in the mire is trying to get up I can't believe in kicking him in the face. Most of us get into the mire at some time or other and what we need is a hand, not a foot. He will not appear in our pages again, nor I think, in the pages of any other magazine. That ought to be enough.

When the matter was brought to our attention we at once took the matter up with the victimized author's publishers. Naturally we apologize to you our readers and regret the occurrence sincerely. If it is necessary to say in so many words that we were entirely innocent in the matter, I say so now.

BUT to return to Mr. Beadle's case, here is his letter and, following it, a sample letter from one of the men who brought up the question of plagiarism against him. I'd like to say that these men *were* men. No one branded anybody a crook without waiting for facts or giving the other fellow a chance. They merely raised the question (and we are always grateful to our readers for that kind of watchful service) and, when Mr. Beadle made his reply, investigated the case anew and promptly and manfully owned up to their quite natural mistake.

Paris, France.

Dear Sir: The editor of *Adventure* has been kind enough to forward me your letter of the 5 October.

Yes, the story in question was sold as new and original and not as a reprint.

The source or inspiration for the yarn was a passage or several in the "Golden Bough" (Frazer) in which he speaks of a certain valley—I think—somewhere in Asia Minor where bodies of beasts, birds, and humans, are preserved by the action of calcium; in another passage he refreshed my mind regarding the earthquake god in Uganda; the rest was evolved from my knowledge of the country in which the story is placed, a dozen facts, the possibility—and existence of—Phenician gold bangles, the ancient presence of said Phenicians or Egyptians, the conformation of the volcanic country, the existence of a vast district—as described—then unexplored—which has since been. I wrote to Camp-Fire pointing out the coincidence—explored and a tribe allied to the Waganda and carrying many of the traits which I attributed to them.

Your accusation apparently carries considerable likeness in the structure of "The Bowl of Alabaster.' Now I wonder whether you have not read in some few issues previously "The Alabaster Goddess" to which this story was the sequel?

After all, you know it's rather a serious charge—in effect that I have stolen so many hundred dollars from the Ridgway Company. Wouldn't you be sore if some one accused you of theft in such a manner? Let's have a square deal and try to hunt up that magazine in which you found the story. Will you?—CHAS. BEADLE.

Chicago, Illinois.

Some two or three weeks ago I received your letter, and the other day the one enclosed arrived from Paris from the author of "The Alabaster Goddess" and "The Bowl of Alabaster."

I must apologize for my error, for it is such. I had read the first story and, when reading the second one, did not notice that the latter was a sequel to the former. When the enclosed letter arrived I went to the Chicago Public Library, looked up the first story and came back and am writing this letter of apology. The error is altogether mine and I accused the author of stealing the settings from himself.— —— ——.

BY THE time this reaches you, Gordon McCreagh of our writers' brigade will be in South America on an interesting expedition, and I think you'll want to hear about it from this letter from him and from the fuller data that follow, and to help.

My dear Mr. Hoffman: It is seldom that I bust into Camp-Fire—though I always read it first. Somehow I can't get away from the feeling that my talk would read: "This is ME. Look what I done, boys. Whoop."

But this time things are different. I'm not shouting a colorful version of derring do. I ain't done noth'n'—yet. Maybe I won't do noth'n' neither. But anyway, I'm going out on a trip, and I would like you to print as much of this as you can find room for, since it is an appeal for help from those of the brethren who have been and seen and done.

I'm going with the Mulford Exploration of the Amazon Delta, shooting moving pictures and prodding the llama train and Quichua porters in the base of the psychological moment. I don't know this country at all—it seems that nobody knows a great deal of our route—but I'm wide open for all the information anybody can give me.

I'm enclosing part of a reprint from *The Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter* giving an idea of what the expedition proposes to do; though the route has been changed quite a bit. We start from Arica in Chile, railroad up to La Paz, and then over the mountains and get lost. The plan is to endeavor to locate some stream which will connect with some stream which will connect with some stream, etc., etc., till it hits the Amazon. I read in an A. A. reply in the last issue that nobody knew much about this part of Bolivia; but if any of your readers has any information I shall be wide open and grateful for it.

From the Amazon the expedition branches off into the Rio Negro and follows that till it becomes a trickle, and then over the mountains again with the object of reaching Bogota in Colombia—another stretch of bad ground which the same A. A. reply says nothing is known about.

From Bogota it will be easy going home; but the foregoing part of the trip will take about eighteen months; and, as I said before, I am wide open for any information that anybody has. Anything at all, from things to avoid all the way up to things to go and see—and film.

I shall be away by the fifteenth of February; so I don't expect to see this in print before I go. But I shall be in La Paz making arrangements for the big hike for a couple of months before the scientific gents come along; so my address till about May 1st will be, care of American Consul, Arica, Chile.

Here, then, is the call for help. Brothers of the Camp-Fire, give me of your knowledge.

And if anybody wants to loan me any sort of a crank gun to try out, Me For It!

Heaps thanks for the service.

Yours very truly,
GORDON MACCREAGH.

(From *The Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter*)

THE original idea of the expedition was far less comprehensive than that which now has developed. Dr. Rusby having gained information from travelers in Northwestern Brazil of certain medicines in use by the natives which possessed very interesting properties, and properties that might render them of value in medicine, has long desired to observe their effects as there used and to secure supplies for scientific investigation, and it was to carry out this object that the plan was originally conceived. In performing this work it would also be practicable to make a general collection of the flora of a very extensive region in Southeastern Colombia and Northwestern Brazil, in which no botanical collections have as yet been made.

Since the New York Botanical Garden, Harvard University and the National Museum have recently undertaken to prepare a flora of Northern South America, including the region referred to, this added work would be most timely. Additional interest attached to such collecting because it would go far toward completing the survey of the Andean flora on which Dr. Rusby has done so much in his travels in Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil and Venezuela. Dr. Rusby is, mo eover, honorary curator of the Economic Museum of the New York Botanical Garden, of which an elaborate catalogue is now going through the press.

Many of the drugs of the region are very imperfectly known, as to their origin and collection. In the same connection Dr. Rusby was desirous of visiting Southeastern Bolivia, the only part of that country where he has not made collections. With all these objects in view, Dr. Rusby appealed to the H. K. Mulford Co. for co-operation in the carrying out of such an undertaking. Milton Campbell, the president, submitted the idea to his scientific department with the result of considerably extending the scope of the work. It was pointed out that a number of the endemic diseases of the tropics were very imperfectly known, and that their careful study would not only prove of scientific value, but might result in the discovery of curative measures. It was particularly desirable that the transmission of diseases by insect agency should be thoroughly investigated. A discussion of these subjects showing that their investigation was feasible, the proposition was submitted to the directors of the Mulford Co. and was approved. Dr. Rusby's original plan, as submitted to Mr. Campbell, had included provisions for commercial adjuncts by which the expenses of the exploration would be repaid and a probable profit returned, but the Mulford Co. deleted these items, stating that they preferred public recognition as making a contribution to science and to medicine, free from all direct commercial returns.

The subject of entomology having thus been included in the research, it was decided to broaden this work and to make a general collection of insects, and arrangements were made with the United States Bureau of Entomology to classify these insects and report upon them. Out of these discussions a suggestion arose for studying methods of repelling or destroying the numerous tropical insects which so annoy travelers and not infrequently become the indirect causes of fatalities, and the Division of Insecticides prepared a comprehensive series of formulæ of substances that might prove useful in this direction. Supplies of these mixtures will be taken and systematically tested. At the same time, every opportunity will be improved for recording the pollination of flowers by particular insects and those destructive to timber and other vegetation will be studied.

Dr. Rusby had been greatly interested, on previous expeditions, in the immense variety of fishes in the Amazon basin, and in the peculiar characters and habits of many of them, and determined to carry materials for extensive collections of this fauna. On submitting this idea to Drs. David Starr Jordan and C. H. Eigenmann, among the leading authorities on the subject, they at once expressed their readiness to assist in the investigation of the fishes collected. It is also probable that they will be represented upon the exploration by one of the ichthyologists from the University of Indiana.

AMONG other subjects of interest is that of oil seeds, of which there is a vast variety in the forests of tropical America. From fifty to a hundred pounds or more of each of these will be collected as encountered, and these will be shipped home for expression and the study of their oils. Professor Augustus A. Gill, of the Boston Institute of Technology, has undertaken to pursue these researches. Similarly, there are very many plants containing essential oils that are likely to prove of value, and Dr. Edward Kremers, of the University of Wisconsin, will interest himself in the study of these. The region to be traversed abounds in serpents and other reptiles, both poisonous and innocent. These will be preserved like the fishes. The batrachians will be sent to Professor Ruthven of the University of Michigan and the others to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

While all these subjects are of great interest, the special work of Dr. Rusby and his party will be in connection with medicinal plants and drugs, for the study of which elaborate provisions have been made. Dr. Rusby hopes to shed fresh light on the manufacture of blow gun and other arrow poisons, of which several varieties appear to be in use in the region to be visited. Some of the more important commercial drugs will be traced to their origin, and absolutely authentic material will be secured for study. A very superior quality of rubber is produced in the regions, and this will receive close attention.

The complete study of the medicinal products will occupy the attention of many specialists. Dr. Rusby will himself undertake their botanical classification and description. Their microscopical study will be pursued by Dr. Ballard at the Columbia University School of Pharmacy, by Professor Youngken at Philadelphia, Schneider of Nebraska, Newcomb of Minnesota and others. Their chemistry will be studied by Arny of Columbia, Jordan of Purdue, Sayre and Havenhill of Kansas. The study of their physiological and medicinal properties will occupy the attention of many medical men at Yale, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins and connected with the American

Medical Association headquarters in Chicago.

The date on which the party will start has not yet been announced.

During about six months of the year that the exploration is expected to occupy, the party will be entirely isolated from civilized sources of support, and dependent on their own resources. Since the country abounds in fish and game, and since many sources of food-supply in the form of wild vegetation are known to Dr. Rusby, it would be possible to subsist largely on the natural food supplies of the country. The obtaining of such supplies, however, would consume much precious time that would otherwise be devoted to scientific collection and recording. For this reason, a food supply sufficient for the entire time will be carried into the wilderness. These supplies have been carefully selected, so as to provide a daily ration that is both wholesome and agreeable, since Dr. Rusby has learned by experience that many, if not most of the ills from which such travelers suffer have their basis in poor nutrition. An ample supply of medicines will also be taken. Since one does not know what particular medicine may be needed, a full supply must be made available. Quinine, in the form of the bimuriate, will, of course, be the principal item in this line. The onset of malarial fever may be said to be impossible when the blood contains a sufficient amount of this alkaloid.

It was originally designed to carry several folding canvas boats, but inquiry has developed the advice that these boats could not stand the rough waters to be navigated. The native river boats are very heavy, with thick and hard walls and can well resist the severe shocks resulting from striking upon the rocks in the rapids. At many points, of course, portages must be made.

The party will of necessity be well armed.

Among the drugs which it is expected will be encountered are tolu, ipecac of both species, simaruba, guaiac, copaiba of several species, manaca, guarana, muira-puama, caroba, several resins, coto, para-coto and cocillana.

PLEASE forget this talk about "butting in." No butting is necessary; you're already in. It's up to me as a sort of unofficial toast-master to pass on to the circle in general those talks that seem most likely to interest most of us, and not to pass on those talks that don't seem likely to. But I've noticed that almost none of you try to talk unless you have something worth listening to, so let's not worry about that part of it.

There were a word and a phrase in the following letter that I couldn't make out for sure, so I omitted them in the places indicated:

El Paso, Texas.

Can you crowd around a bit and let an old-timer get a seat in the old line?

HAVE just arrived back in the old U. S. A. after being away for nine years. Six of them in the British Army. Saw the show from Mons to Mons, 1914-1918. Four times got stopped, last on Nov. 9, 1918, which laid me in hospital till lately, spent the three years before that in Africa and Egypt and a short spell in Australia and India and am tickled to death to get to the States. Am jumping from this town this week for Frisco and then don't know where. But am traveling fast and light.

Well, hope you don't think I am impudent butting in this way, but have read Camp-Fire some and thought I would butt in.

HAVE prospected over South America, Mexico and Alaska the last twenty years and know lots of the old-timers, and wonder if any of them will remember the name; if so, write care of *Adventure* and I will get them sometime. I may hit it down in Chile for the Winter and see if I can't get a grub-stake and then the North next Spring.

Well, my little bit of the war wasn't bad. Took part in the first battle of Mons and the (?) from there to the Marne and it was some hike, I tell you, and those Scots they fight like the fiends of —ll. They were some boys. The British Regulars could not be thought much (?) of the game of fighting. They knew it all.

Well, I had a year of it before I got my first one and laid me up a while. Was in the front line at Arras when the States came in and was glad to hear it, I can tell you. I was with another Yank when he was killed, Lonnie Pat of Baltimore, and a darn good pal he was.

Again hope you will pardon my butting in.—LUCK STUART.

MANY of you, I know, in addition to liking Hugh Pendexter's stories as stories and as presentations of the actual, living early days of our country, are as grateful to him as I am for presenting the *truth.*

The school histories are not only dull and dry, but for the most part biased—often repressing facts not favorable to "our side," minimizing here, magnifying there. All our enemies were crooks and devils; all of us were spotless and noble heroes. (Except poor old Benedict Arnold, who was a plain, straightforward traitor and is still abused by us while we let thousands of worse traitors in public offices go right on betraying the people's trust in countless ways and in more sneaking and cowardly fashion. To me Benedict Arnold is a far cleaner man and better American than, for example, the legislator who lets party or personal interests, instead of the whole people's interests, determine his vote on even one single measure. In fact, I like burglars and horse-thieves and such better than these peace-time betrayers of their country. For robbers are what they are and do not pose as noble patriots while they help ruin the country they claim to serve; a burglar's word may be as good as gold, but the politicians have been proving for generations that their promises are only to be forgotten when convenient; a horse-thief at least has courage enough to take a very definite risk, but the political office-holder of the common type is merely a jackal who goes far but works underground and always plays it safe; a thief robs a few people; these others rob, and betray, the whole people, and many a noble legislator or other public "servant" has done the people infinitely more harm by one single crooked vote than all the thieves have done them in a year; also, why criticize a burglar's ethics when the law-makers themselves set him the example of forgetting other people's interests for the sake of their own? Yes, I know, when I get started on this subject I can't stop. But I wish more Americans saw things in the same light. Now I'll go back to what I was talking about.)

OF COURSE, if you read the histories written by our former enemies you'll find them equally biassed on the other side, but that doesn't make our own histories any more exact. Also, most of our histories are sectional. Most of those on the Revolutionary War were written by New Englanders and, until Yorktown itself forces their hands, they magnify the Northern campaigns and minimize those of the South.

So when Hugh Pendexter comes along and gives us a more fair and balanced, as well as a more living, presentation, it fills one of those long-felt wants. Here's something from him concerning his serial that begins in this issue, dealing with Marion, the "Swamp Fox" who gave the British so much trouble in the Southern Colonies during our struggle for independence:

Norway, Maine.

South Carolina's position and experience during the Revolutionary War was most unique. I have endeavored to adhere closely to history in depicting the partisan warfare and the magnificent work accomplished by seemingly insignificant forces. I have not attempted to picture the part played by those other heroic leaders, aside from Marion, as the scope of one story would not permit. I have taken the liberty to transpose the sequence of the battle at the Black Mingo and the surprise attack on Tynes at Tarcote, as I wished to introduce my hero into a growing climax of fighting, having the almost bloodless encounter for his first experience. The details of those two engagements, as well as the attempt to capture Tarleton and his pursuit of Marion, are taken from historic accounts. Descriptions of Marion follow those given by his contemporaries.

LANCE'S experience in the provost prison and his unexpected sentence to death follow almost exactly the mode of procedure in sentencing to death Colonel Isaac Hayne (Ramsay's spelling; others, including Weems, spell it "Haynes").

Among the books consulted in building the story are Ramsay's "History of the Revolution of South Carolina," 2 vols.; McCrady's "History of South Carolina," 1670-1776, 2 vols.; "Historic Towns of the Southern States," edited by L. P. Powell; "Diplomatic Correspondence of American Revolution," Vol. 2, edited by Sparks; Simms' "Life of Marion;" Weems' and Horry's "Life of General Marion;" G. Tucker's "History of the U. S.;" Sumner's "History of American Currency;" G. W. Greene's "Life of Nathaniel Greene;" J. Fiske's "War of Independence;" "F. A. Michaux's Travels," edited by Reuben G. Thwaites.

MY MAJOR purpose has been to tell a story. Back of that, in order to make the story more realistic, I have attempted to picture the kindly relations between the province of South Carolina and the mother-country, the hesitation of many sincere men in coming to a decision. I have even wished to show that a Tory could be sincere, and was; and that while from this very sincerity came most ferocious fighting it was the same virtue that brought Whig and Tory together as neighbors after the war closed. Excesses were committed, but it is not at all my intention to paint all British officers with the same brush. If I have played up Cornwallis, Rawdon, Tarleton and Wemyss in an unfavorable light, it is thus that history records them; and on the other hand I have shown there were *Posbys* and *Masters*, both fictitious in the story, but having their type in 1780.

JUST before Charleston was surrendered by General Lincoln, and while the line of retreat was still open for all "idle mouths," Marion was forced to leave the city because of an accident. He was at Alexander McQueen's house on Tradd Street and McQueen was passing the wine and insisting that each guest partake of repeated bumpers. To insure this participation in his liquid offerings he locked the doors and announced they should remain locked until all had acquitted themselves according to his notions. Marion was an abstemious man. Not wishing to have a scene and having no intention of filling up on wine he opened a window and jumped out, breaking his ankle. Whether he would have remained to be captured with the city, or have escaped, had he not broken his ankle, may not be known positively, but it is my humble opinion he would have broken loose to "fight another day."

DON'T forget that the original paintings of *Adventure* covers are for sale to the highest bidder. All covers for issues previous to that of February 3, 1920, have already been disposed of. Bids will be accepted on originals of covers published since that date, and on the first of next July the paintings bid for will be sent express collect to the highest bidders. No bid of less than ten dollars per cover will be considered. Send in your bid any time.——A. S. H.

PROSPECTING IN LATIN-AMERICA

"Gold Is Where You Find It"—Hydraulicking, Pocket, Crevice and Moss Hunting—Prize Nugget Weighed 180 Pounds

By Edgar Young

IT IS well for one who intends going on a prospecting-trip in Latin-America to familiarize himself with the rudiments of geology, either by asking experienced prospectors who may be in the vicinity or consulting some good book on the subject; and also to acquaint himself with the physical appearance of valuable metallic ores other than gold, such as silver, copper, platinum, lead, zinc, iron, manganese, nickel, cobalt, mercury, tin, tungsten, uranium, vanadium, chromium, arsenic, antimony, bismuth, and other ores.

Specimens of such ores are to be found in museums in the larger cities and many of the larger schools of mining boast of a large collection.

Another thing that the average prospector overlooks is to acquaint himself with precious and semi-precious stones as they exist in their native state. A very little study on this subject might prove to be worth a fortune. There are many books published on crystallography, the majority of them showing plates of stones in the matrix, which may be consulted at the larger public libraries.

New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, San Francisco, and such cities have large collections of books dealing with mining, prospecting and gem-hunting. A great many of these are highly technical and of scant use to the ordinary man. For the amateur the three following are suggested:

"Prospecting for Gold and Silver," Arthur Lakes, The Colliery Engineering Company, Scranton, Pa., 1895.

"The World's Minerals," Leonard J. Spencer, Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1916.

"A Book of Precious Stones," Julius Wodiska, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1909.

Over six hundred tons of pure gold are taken from the earth each year. It is to be found in every land on the earth's surface and in the bottom of every sea. New mines are being discovered constantly, large nuggets brought to light, rich pockets found, and poor men either turned into rich ones in a single day or cheated out of their discoveries by men more cunning than themselves.

And in just such facts as these lies the fascination to prospecting. A man can work harder and faster and longer when he is getting a few "colors" in his pan than at anything else in the world. It is gambling and rainbow-chasing with a vengeance, the pot of gold being just beyond the finger-tips.

So much for the psychology of the gold-hunting game. And in scrambling after gold, men pass up rich mines of other metals and stones through ignorance that would net them fortunes.

A fundamental fact for the prospective prospector to get fixed in his mind is the knowledge that the earth's crust as it now appears is not the same as it has always been. Mountains have upheaved, even in very recent times, in the middle of valleys, and carried river-bottoms to the very tops and left them there. Volcanos have poured forth lava, turned some rivers from their courses and dammed others between valleys to form lakes. Existing lakes have dried up. Land has come up out of the sea and land has sunk into the sea. Continents have been joined together that were formerly separate islands.

Prehistoric sharks' teeth larger than quart cups have been dug up in the bottom of the Panama Canal under hills several hundred feet high; and remains of marine growths, shells, and other sea fossils have been found on the tops of very high mountains. Such facts as these make a failure of the "high-boot man" when he goes out to prospect.

The "Dub" Does It—It is almost invariably the "dub" who locates the rich bonanzas. He locates them by going just where they shouldn't be and finding them there. It is very easy to explain how they got there after they are once found.

This is where the geologist comes in handy. He can read the past record of upheaval and erosion. But on the surface things were disguised so well that no man could tell without digging down to find out. This is a well-known fact that is stated by the geologists themselves.

"Gold is where you find it." This adage is as old as prospecting. There are current translations of it in all countries. Consequently while it is well to know some geology it will not do to rely absolutely upon it when prospecting.

The "mother rock," or matrix of gold, differs in various parts of the world. In some places it is a white quartz with the gold running through it in tiny veins, or in thin web-like sheets; in others, as in the Transvaal, it is a hard conglomerate of quartz and other materials cemented together, with the gold appearing in minute particles throughout the mass; while in other places it is found in metalliferous veins, associated with iron pyrites, silver ore, and in chemical combinations with tellurium. These are the principal exceptions from the well-known statement that "gold-mining is confined to crystalline rocks of the Archæan age and with the porphyries associated with them."

It is well to state that no absolutely pure native gold has ever been found. It is always associated with silver in the form of an alloy. The more silver it contains, the lighter the color.

Pure gold is as soft as lead. Even with the alloys of silver it is heavier than lead. The next heaviest substance to be found while prospecting—for lead in the ore is lighter than when refined—is a black sand, the altered residue of iron pyrites, which is almost invariably found in the vicinity of gold.

Throughout the ages from time immemorial a multitude of causes have brought the mother rocks of gold to the surface, torn them from their surroundings, subjected them to the action of the elements, or sunk them to the bottoms of rivers, lakes, and seas. Those that remained in the atmosphere disintegrated slowly and freed the particles of gold imprisoned within them. Those that went into stream bottoms were dissolved and ground to dust by the action of the water and the friction of other stones. The entire inhomogeneous mass began working from a higher to a lower level, impelled by water and the action of gravity.

The gold, being the heaviest, sought to travel at the very bottom of the mass. The bed-rock was uneven and filled with crevices and pot-holes. The bottoms of the streams were broken by rock-bound basins and dams. The gold, being on the very bottom, was caught and held, while the lighter material flowed over the top. This process is going on at the present time and while it is true that millions of tons of gold are being washed into the bottoms of lakes and oceans, beyond recovery until an upheaval takes place, other millions of tons are being caught and held to be discovered by man and diverted into unnatural pockets, banks and vaults.

The separating of gold from sand and gravel in which it is found is done by the primitive combination of water and gravity. The same methods that were the cause of the gold being there are used to extract it. Artificial stops or catches in the form of cleats and similar devices are placed in troughs into which running water is diverted. The sand and gravel are shoveled in, the lighter materials are carried away by the water and the gold settles and is held by the "riffles" and cleats nailed to the bottom.

"Hydraulicking" consists in building a dam high above, piping the water down, tearing the dirt from the mountainside with a high-pressure nozzle and then placing sluice-boxes so as to allow the dirt and water to run through. In this way thousands of tons may be moved with small effort and placer ground made to pay when it would not do so otherwise.

Prospecting for gold "in place," or gold that has not yet been freed from its mother rock, consists in tracing back free gold to the point from which it began its journey. The placer deposits not being in paying quantities, or having been exhausted, cause the prospector to begin a search up the mountainsides. Sometimes "floats," or pieces of the mother rock, are soon encountered bearing bits of gold embedded in them or "high grade" with the gold showing in tiny webs and sheets. When these are found the "mother" lode is not far above. Often it requires a long search of many miles before a "float" is found. And sometimes all trace of the original rock has disappeared.

Places where this has occurred and where the gold has settled and remains in large quantities is known as a "pocket." Many of these have been found where it was possible to dig the gold out with the bare hands by pailfuls. Often the entire placer deposits of a country can be traced back to a single small "pocket" covering a few square yards, the placer deposits ranging away from this spot in the shape of a large fan. Smaller "pockets" formed by the decomposition of some one large piece of gold-bearing rock have been found with the gold huddled together like chestnuts which have been hoarded by a squirrel.

"Pocket-Hunting," according to the usual definition, means the tracing back of "rough," or "untraveled," gold to these smaller deposits, many of which sometimes are the only indication of the vanished mother rock.

When a body of the rock or ore is found "in place," if there is a sufficient amount of it, it is examined to see if it is "free milling." That is, can the gold be freed by crushing to powder between heavy rollers or under stamps and then be separated with a sort of placer process, mixing with water and collecting the gold with mercury placed between the cleats?

If not, a cyanid plant will have to be installed. By this method the ore is crushed to powder, dissolved by a dilute solution of potassium cyanid, run over a "concentrating" table and deposited from this solution by an electric current.

Gold ores are tested in various ways to ascertain if they are worth exploiting. The simplest of these methods is by pulverizing a certain quantity of the ore taken at random from various parts of the vein and from the gold extracted, by panning in horn or pan, or melting down, if not free milling, estimating what it will run per ton of ore. The magnifying-glass will tell if any speck or streak in a piece of rock is gold or not.

Gold has the same color when viewed from all sides. In this it differs from "fool's gold." A piece no matter how small can be scratched with a knife-point and hammered out to extreme thinness. The ordinary acid test may be applied.

One who is unfamiliar with the appearance of precious stones should save any strangely colored or transparent crystal that is encountered. Small assaying-furnaces should be taken along if they can be afforded. Some of these are of diminutive size and are not costly. A few chests of chemicals for making mineral tests are advertised in mining journals.

Prospecting-Outfit—The following is a fair idea of an outfit: Pick and shovel, hammer, drills, blasting-powder, fuse, gold-pan, horn spoon, large iron spoon for melting metals, magnifying-glass, pocket scales, compass, field-glasses or telescope, horseshoe magnet, matches in water-tight container, frying-pan, coffee-pot, tin cup, pot, combination knife-fork-spoon, bottle of quicksilver, jerked beef, flour, beans, coffee or tea, plenty of salt, pepper, baking-powder, a change of khaki or corduroy clothing, socks, shirt, underwear, shoes, shoe soles and nails, shoemaker's last, rubber poncho, blanket, pneumatic pillow, tent-top, hobbles for mule or burro, bars of solder, soldering-iron, acid, needles and thread, soap, razor, scissors, large bottle of quinin, salts, permanganate of potash, bluestone, and a few other tropical remedies. Where more than one are going in the same party this outfit may be increased.

Everything that water will affect should be protected against rain by either sealing or soldering into air-tight containers when camping in the open. Medicines, particularly, should be well sealed. Mosquito bars should be used in low country where these pests prevail. Excellent hammocks can be purchased locally.

How to Use a Gold-Pan, or "Dish"—Sand and gravel are scooped into the pan until it is full. It is then dipped into the water and shaken hard to settle the sand through the gravel. As these gravel appear on the surface they are taken off by hand, scooped away at first and later picked out with the fingers. In the mean time the lighter materials have been allowed to flow over the side.

More water is continually added and this process goes on until a double handful of heavier sand remains in the bottom of the pan. Using a slight rotary motion, the prospector begins to wash carefully what remains, holding one side lower than the other and allowing the lighter sands to flow over the top and adding more water constantly.

Finally, with an infinite amount of pains only a few spoonfuls of sand remain. This is given a quick flip to spread it over the bottom of the pan, which brings to light whatever gold it may contain. If the amount of gold is worth saving the water is drained off and the sand is scraped into a sack to be heated over a fire in the shovel at night, and collected by means of quicksilver, which holds it in the form of amalgam and which evaporates over a hot fire; or the sand is placed in the gold-pan and separated in the usual manner by careful washing. This is for small "flour" and tiny nuggets.

The larger nuggets may be picked out with the hands or fingers and upon the point of a knife. Nuggets have been found weighing one hundred and eighty pounds. The "Welcome" or "Welcome Stranger" found in Australia, and which weighed this amount, netted over $40,000 when melted down. Other single nuggets have been found ranging from this value down to a few cents.

"Crevice-Hunting"—This term is used to denote the operation of following along some stream, usually where the placer deposits are light, and digging the sand from tiny cracks and pot-holes in the bed-rock near the bank, preferably on the inner side of a stream that overflows, with a spoon and collecting it in the pan to be later panned out when it becomes filled. Men make wages by this method on the upper Sacramento River in California at the present time, but it is a rather unethical way of prospecting according to the customs, and "crevice-hunters" are scorned by prospectors who are searching for mines.

"Moss-Hunting"—This operation consists in going along gold-bearing streams and plucking the moss from the stones over which the water has overflowed and which contain small quantities of sand and fine gold dust that has been so small as to defy the action of gravity. This sand and dust are washed from the moss into the pan and separated by further washing.

In South America, in the dry gulches down which water flows at certain seasons, deerskins are pegged to the ground with the hair pointing up-stream, to catch gold in a similar fashion.

A Cradle, or Rocker—This consists of a box mounted on rockers similar to an old-fashioned baby cradle. This box is water-tight. The operator either places it near some running stream and brings his dirt to it and then washes it by adding water in the same manner as is done in a pan, or he packs his water to where his placer ground is located, should none be near, and washes it upon the spot.

Sluice-Box—This is a long trough, or box, with the top open through which dirt and water are run. Cleats are nailed on the bottom to arrest the gold, and usually a number of large boulders are strewn down its length to assist the settling-process of the gold. Quicksilver is also placed between the cleats to hold the smaller bits that might escape otherwise, when it is to be obtained.

The "long-tom" used in the Guianas and in South Africa is constructed along the same principle, with the exception that it has what is called a "wash-board" for the breaking up of hard masses.

Laws for Protecting Prospectors—The laws of all civilized countries recognize the prospector as a valuable member of society. In the western part of the U. S. a prospector, hard put for grub, can flag an overland train and force them to supply him with food and water; and various animals that are easy to capture, such as the porcupine, are protected for his benefit.

Latin-America also welcomes men to search out and bring to light valuable mineral deposits. A trained prospector is given the title of "mining engineer" in the smaller places.

Mining Laws—The mining laws of Latin-America are similar but much more liberal than our own; with the exception of British Honduras and British Guiana, where a license is charged for prospecting and the ownership of the mine remains in the "crown" and is leased to the discoverer and a tax charged on the gold mined, and various other charges. It is surprizing that these British colonies are without doubt farther behind the times than any Latin-American countries, have less population and are less developed. This fact should be borne in mind by critics of Latin-American republics.

The mining laws of the various Latin-American countries are to be found in a book published by the Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C., and sold at cost of printing; and also in a book called "Mining Laws of the World," to be found in the reference rooms of the larger public libraries. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Washington, D. C., publishes "Daily Commerce Reports" which give changes in land and mining laws when they are made. The American consul in each country keeps files of these laws and changes made.

VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES FREE TO ANY READER

THESE services of *Adventure* are free to *any one*. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules*, thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application*. We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

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A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying*.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL SELL: First and Mid-Dec., 1918, and all issues for 1919; $3.00, not including postage.—Address DR. HOBART P. SHATTUCK, 137 East Adams St., Los Angeles, Cal.

WILL SELL: March, 1918, to date for ten cents each, or make an offer.—Address DONALD L. SMITH, 4218 Appleton Ave., Oakley, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of this issue.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 519 Citizens Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure.")

Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the department in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert will probably give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their departments subject only to our general rules for Ask *Adventure*, but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but for their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. Ask *Adventure* covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose department it seems to belong.**

1. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

2. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, Seattle Press Club, 1209 Fifth Ave., Seattle, Wash. Covering ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; seafaring on fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks, small-boat sailing, and old-time shipping and seafaring.

3. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Such questions as pertain to the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire should be sent to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Covering Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; river, lake and road travel, game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs; and their markets.

5. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, 6 West Concord Ave., Orlando, Florida. Covering Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

6. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Maine. Covering Maine; fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

7. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. Covering the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel, Early history of Missouri Valley.

8. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big timber sections.

9. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
LARRY ST. JOHN, Melbourne Beach, Florida. Covering Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

10. Western U. S. Part 1
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Edgar Young, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, customs, language, game, local conditions, minerals, trading.

23. South America. Part 1
Edgar Young, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

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27. Japan
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30. Africa Part 2
George E. Holt, Frederick, Md. Covering Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

31. ★ Africa Part 3 Portuguese East Africa
R. W. Waring, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Covering trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

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36. ★ Australia and Tasmania
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Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers and ammunition. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the Ask *Adventure* editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns (including foreign and American makes). J. B. Thompson, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers (including foreign and American makes). D. Wiggins, Salem, Ore.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. Thompson, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Commission, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

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Fancy Shooting

IT'S always a pleasure to publish a set of questions and answers such as the foregoing; for when the Ask *Adventure* correspondence contains matters of technical importance, together with subjects of general interest, there's something to attract the attention of everybody. And what outdoor man is not interested in "fancy shooting," whether he be a gun expert or not?

Question:—"1.—Where can I purchase a Browning automatic rifle?

2.—What is the greatest range of the Colt's single-acting army .45 cal. 7½ in. barrel?

3.—What is the most powerful small-ball rifle made, meaning the longest range?

4.—Please describe the fancy shots.

Please do not put my name in print."—N. T., Leonard, No. Dak.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—I regret to say that you can not buy a Browning rifle, as they were only made for government use, and are not for sale to civilians. The rifles invented by John M. Browning are made and sold commercially by the Remington Arms Co., of Ilion, N. Y., and a letter to them will give you all particulars in regard to them. Brownings were also made in sporting models, like the Remington, in Belgium, before the war, but the entire factory was stolen by the Huns and sent to Germany.

2.—I do not know the extreme range of the Colt .45 with the long barrel, but do know that a horse-thief was killed near Ada, Okla. Terr., some years since at two hundred and sixty yards, and think I could make a man hard to find with one at four hundred yards. The bullet will perhaps go over a mile when elevated at forty-five degrees. But it's only guesswork; I know they are very deadly for three hundred yards.

3.—I think the .30 Newton is the longest-ranged small-bore rifle we have today, its ballistics with 225-grain bullet at 1,500 yards, the farthest distance shot, showing 1,087 feet-seconds velocity, and 585 foot-pounds energy at that range.

4.—Fancy shooting is a very difficult subject to treat in a letter, as every professional shot has some stunts peculiar to himself; but I will describe a few of my own, and others I have seen. After trying them out, you may be able to originate a few of your own.

Shooting with a mirror so fixed on the stock of the rifle that the sights show when the rifle is aimed behind the neck, over the shoulders, between the legs, under the arms, etc. Lying on the ground and hitting stones, etc., thrown in the air by an assistant. Placing a large piece of paper over the muzzle of the rifle, hiding the sights from the eye, and hitting small objects.

Throwing a brick in the air, breaking it with a bullet, and then hitting two or more bits of the brick before they touch the ground. Firing from the hip and hitting objects on the ground. The same, hitting tin cans in the air—is a very hard trick, by the way. Rolling over and over on the ground, shooting at objects on the ground ahead of or behind the shooter.

Firing with a rifle or revolver in each hand, at two objects in different locations at once. Throwing a can in the air, then picking up the rifle and hitting the can. Five or six shots fired through a tin can when thrown once in the air.

There are so many stunts possible that I presume no one man knows them all. I have enumerated a few that you might try out; and when proficient think up some ones for yourself. It's mighty interesting, and fine sport. Incidentally it makes a man quick both mentally and physically, and may be a very valuable accomplishment some day.

Cruising the South Sea Islands

NOBODY knows yet how many of these islands there are. Maybe this inquirer will find one on which the foot of a white man has never pressed before. Surely that's an added incentive for going there:

Question:—"I would like to take a cruise soon, starting at San Francisco to the Hawaiian Islands, the Cook's Islands and the Marshall Islands and would like information concerning the Marshall Islands, covering customs, inhabitants and opportunities for adventurers. Would an 87-foot auxiliary schooner stand the trip? I expect to continue around the world.

How would you advise me to carry my money, I mean by checks or express company drafts or otherwise?"—ROBERT C. JACKSON, Sunbury, Ohio.

Answer, by Mr. Mills:—That is an interesting trip you contemplate. It is a queer coincidence that on the day after I received your letter I read in the Auckland *Star* that the cutter-rigged *Ha 'abai Veu* had just left that port for the two-thousand-mile voyage to Tonga. And the *Veu* is only 36 feet in length, 11-feet beam, and draws only 5 feet of water, which of course enables her to slither over the coral reefs into the safe waters of each island. Needless to add, the *Veu* is in the inter-island trade.

Auckland is New Zealand's most northern seaport, and therefore closest to the heart of the groups of South Sea Islands that lie above us. Ergo, you need not have any doubts about your auxiliary 87-foot schooner tackling the voyage you contemplate, for the leg from 'Frisco to Honolulu is only 100 miles more than the trip of the *Veu*. You will have a shorter stretch to the Marshalls, but you will be right in the thick of the groups of islands on the run right across and down to the Cook Group.

Are you aware that since the Germans were thrust out of the Pacific, Japan is now the overlord of the Marshall Group? That should mean some trouble for you to cruise thereabout.

However, the Pacific is fine and large and much of it is free to all. So why worry?

The population of the Marshalls is about 12,000, mostly centered in the islands of Ahrno, Majuro, and Alinglablab. There are some 46 atolls, presenting to the investigator the best examples in the world of the coral formation. As a navigator, however, you must beware the coral fence surrounding each island.

The natives, like nearly all South Sea islanders, are good-lookers, of light coppery hue, kindly, friendly, and hospitable; intelligent, and the best navigators and most daring sailors in the Pacific, where good seamen abound. Customs are curious; the line of succession is fairer than the European injustice to women, for it comes through the mother. The chief families amongst the natives are the owners of the land, the ordinary native being a tenant. Under the native rule, before the missionary changed things, only "the best people" were buried—the common folks were taken out and dropped in the sea.

Your best plan will be to consult in Honolulu as to how you will deal with the money question.

That Lost Pegleg Mine

THIS inquirer requested us not to print his letter as he didn't want his name published. And we wouldn't print his letter, either, if it contained any secrets. But he says himself that he's writing only from hearsay; so nothing would be gained, and something would be lost, by suppressing an interesting bit of gossip. So we're leaving out the writer's name and any indication of where he lives, and are just giving you extracts from his letter, together with Mr. Harriman's reply:

Question:—"Have you ever heard tell of the Pegleg Smith gold-mine? You know Pegleg Smith used to get gold and gamble it away in Barstow, California, about eighty-five years ago. I believe I'm the only man living today that knows anywhere near where this mine is. If you have ever heard of it please write me all you know about it, as I would like to compare notes, and see how near my description tallies with yours. I hope I'm not asking too much of you.

The Pegleg Smith gold-mine of eighty-five years ago was found once since then. It was found forty years ago by a white man. This man came up missing, but he left twenty thousand in gold in his shanty.

I know where this camp is. And I know where the mountain is where he packed his gold from, but I don't know the exact spot where hiding; but I do believe I can find it. This mountain tallies exactly to all the descriptions I ever heard of the Pegleg Smith mine of eighty-five years ago.

Please let me hear your story regarding it, if ever you heard any.

I'm writing from hearsay."— —— ——.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—Yes, I have heard several versions of the Pegleg Smith mine.

I have heard that Pegleg found three low hills and climbed one. He found a peculiar sunburned gold there, lying about on the ground in nuggets. I have heard an old-timer say that when you are down at Thermal, Coachella Valley, California, you look right out over the Pegleg Smith lost mine, when you look northeast.

I have heard that you had to look southwest to see it. I have heard that it is not in that section at all. I have heard a lot of things about it, but here is what J. Smeaton Chase learned about it on careful investigation.

"Thomas L. Smith—so-called Pegleg—was shot in an Indian fight and his leg was shattered. He amputated the leg with his own hands. He was captain of a band of trappers then.

"On one journey with his band, they came to the the Colorado River and worked down it to the Gila, crossed into California and struck northwest toward what is now known as Warner's Pass or San Felipe Pass. Before reaching the mountains some of the party climbed a low hill near camp one evening and noticed a dark outcropping, thickly sprinkled with yellow particles. They carried away specimens, but did not know they had found gold until they reached San Francisco and the discoveries of gold on the Sacramento made them understand.

"Smith organized a company to return and look for the outcropping, but the loss of part of his equipment put him out of humor and he never went back to see what lay on that low hill."

There you have the result of Chase's careful investigations.

I think it is more likely to be true than nine out of ten of the stories I have heard about it. Dozens have lost their lives hunting the Pegleg Mine. Some sweet day some rancher or roaming boy may be lucky enough to climb that same hill and find the gold. I know I will not be the man to discover it, for I shall not search.

I have heard an old-timer say he believed sand had drifted over and buried the outcropping. A big windstorm may uncover it by and by. *Quien sabe?*

You say you know where the camp is that held the twenty thousand dollars' worth of gold taken from this mine. Have you ever been over the country where the mine is located? If you have been there in Summer, —— won't scare you a mite, because you are seasoned to it.

I know of cases where men have gone delirious in three hours out there, when their water failed. The dry heat sucks all the moisture from your body, dries up your blood and mummifies you in a short time.

I don't want any of it in mine except in Winter, thank you. I would not mind tackling it then with a flivver. If you know positively what mountain the second discoverer got his gold from, you are nearer the treasure than any one I know or have known. It has always been a low hill with those who talked to me during the last thirty-five years.

What Grizzlies Weigh

DO THEY ever hit the 1800-mark? You can't prove it by Mr. Carson. Nor disprove it either:

Question:—"On the strength of information contained in *Adventure*, we are taking the liberty of asking you to give us some information in order to settle an argument.

What is the weight of the largest grizzly bear killed in the Northwest that you know of? One of our friends claims that he killed a grizzly bear in the Copper River country of Alaska that he estimated weighed 1800 pounds.

Any information that you can give us as to the weight of grizzly bears will be appreciated."—E. L. HERTZOG, Murphy, N. C.

Answer, by Mr. Carson:—If you think you are going to land me in a controversy with regard to the weight of grizzlies—well—you lose; that's all.

With regard to that 1800-pounder please let me off with this comment—

"*Some Bear!*"

The largest one I have ever seen is in Stanley Park, Vancouver, B. C. This fat rascal is about eight years old and estimated at 1,200 pounds.

I have seen bears that looked larger at first examination, but a single instance will serve to explain the reason. It was up on the Stikine River; I had shot at the beast as it reared on its haunches and struck it in the paw.

When that chap dropped on all fours and came over to shake hands with me I legged it for a tree. Just before ascending I looked back to kind of get an idea of how much time I had at my disposal and he was only a few feet from me (apparently). In the brief survey I took I estimated that bear to be at least fourteen feet high and placed his weight at about six tons. He shrank so wretchedly after death that I voluntarily knocked off five and a half tons from my first estimate.

Write Captain Wm. Conover, Fort Wrangel, Alaska. Bill knows more about grizzlies than any other man I know of; and, strange to say, he is reliable. He is not only "a mighty hunter before the Lord," but I will back him to do pretty good work behind Him as well. Seriously, I believe him to be a real authority in a case of this kind.

Prospects in Alaska

IN A NEW country the rewards for the pioneer are great; but the endurance of the pioneer must also be great. "Health is wealth" anywhere; but on the frontier it can be added that almost without exception there can be no wealth without health. And that's not mere phrase-twisting, either:

Question:—"Have been seriously thinking of going to Alaska to make a 'stake.' Have traveled quite a bit, but have never been able to make anything. Are there any possibilities for a man of twenty-four, pretty husky, with a view toward adventure and making it worth while?

Am considered a fair shot with rifle, getting the rate of sharpshooter in the Navy, of which I had four years. My experience does not amount to much in the way of prospecting and hunting large game, although I spent quite a lot of time in the mountains around my home.

What would my possibilities be of undertaking this trip?

What are the working conditions there as regards a mechanic?

About what would it cost me to get there from this city, including clothing, outfit, if I would need one, firearms, etc.?

Are there any possibilities of making anything from trapping for fur-bearing animals?"—DONALD G. EMERT, Frankford, Philadelphia, Penn.

Answer, by Mr. Solomons:—Your letter got into my files by accident and was only discovered a few days ago. I am very sorry for the long delay.

However, there is little that I can tell you that will do you much good. *It all depends on the man.* Your being a good shot and husky might be of considerable service in certain circumstances. In general it is character, intelligence and aptitude for any given sort of work that count a hundred times more.

If you are footloose and willing to stick to the country for some years, if necessary, Alaska will offer you a better chance, probably, than any other part of America. But it's a hard, tough graft at the start, and a hazard in any case. It is simply a new country with great resources. That sums its advantages. But it is very big and settlements small and wide apart. Get me?

It would cost you a round two hundred dollars to get into Alaska, and it is *not* best to take an outfit. Take money—and then keep it as tight as you can, buying only what you must. You will go as an adventurer to learn first before you should expect to get anywhere—except by pure luck. Sorry, but this is the best I can do for you.

As for trapping: Yes, there are trappers that make good money—and many, many more of them that don't.

Ask *Adventure* service costs you nothing but reply postage.

Tennessee Mountaineers

THE answer to this inquiry is from an Ask *Adventure* man whose knowledge is based on a residence of years among the people of "Appalachia:"

Question:—"Would like a little information on the Tennessee mountaineers, particularly those engaged in the manufacture of 'moonshine,' what particular part of the mountains they are to be found in, whether the Cumberland Range or Great Smoky Mountains and which way to go to get there. I have always had a desire to see these people, also to sample some of their 'licker.'

Am a railroad man by occupation; used to work on the West Coast route in Mexico with our friend Edgar Young in 1909."—J. R. HARRIS, Mart, Texas.

Answer, by Mr. Liebe:—Tennessee moonshiners are like other people; good, bad, and indifferent. There are those who believe they are working entirely within their rights, and there are those who know they're doing wrong. All of them are suspicious of strangers, and it is nearly always dangerous for a stranger to go among them unless he has somebody to vouch for him.

As to where they are operating—if I knew, I wouldn't tell you. They're where you find 'em! And they're hard to find.

As I say, mountaineers in general are good, bad, and indifferent. They are usually surprizingly good when they're good, and terribly bad when they're bad; the indifferent ones are sort of unknown quantities. They make magnificent friends and relentless enemies; they forget about as the proverbial Indian does—not at all. Primitive people are all like that, perhaps.

The wise stranger never goes into those hills with anything "uppish" in his manner or dress or anything else; this always gets him in bad. Looking the wrong way at their womenfolk also gets an outsider in bad—and quick. A fellow going in there wants to be as democratic as he can be, and that without showing that he is trying.

The "licker" made by the best ones is all right. That made by the worse ones is apt to contain Red Seal lye or some other kind of pizen. Don't drink any of this "licker" unless you know who made it.

Where the Black Man Rules

IF A white man wants to know how it feels to be a member of a subject race, he might try living in Santo Domingo:

Question:—"I am taking advantage of the service bureau of the *Adventure* magazine, of which I am one of the pioneer readers, to ask you for information regarding Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in general, and Porto Plata in particular. I have served in the Navy, and on various "tramp" steamers, and know a little concerning the tropics, but have never touched at Porto Plata.

Now, I with a friend in this regiment intend to go to Porto Plata as soon as our enlistments are completed, having a little capital available. We are considering starting a hotel of the better sort, the kind that would appeal to the better class of natives and tourists (if there are any). At any rate we do not expect any gold-mine or easy money.

So we would be very grateful if you would inform us as to the prospects of such a hotel in Porto Plata, the steamship and railroad lines at that port, the probabilities of tourists, business laws relating to license and property rights of foreigners, and naturalization laws."—W. T. DUGANNE, Sergt.-Bugler, 62nd Infantry, Camp Lee, Virginia, U. S. A.

Answer, by Captain Dingle:—I would like very much to know what rumor of vast wealth to be picked up has gone around lately, concerning Santo Domingo and Haiti. About one in every three inquiries I have, come from Americans who seem bent upon becoming citizens or residents of a negro nation. It's queer.

Anyway, since you ask me, I do not believe there is anything worth while for white men in that island. (Unless they can get a concession from the black president.)

Porto Plata is a fairly busy port, as Santo Dominican ports go, but as for any opening for a decent hotel, why, I don't believe you would really care to cater to a black clientèle, would you? You'd have to be as polite and servile to them as you expect blacks to be to you in a white man's country. They rule, and rightly. They fought for their independence the same as Americans did for theirs, and they are not going to bow down to anybody.

There is practically no tourist trade of any account, though the steamers of the Panama Railroad Steamship Co. run there regularly every two weeks from New York.

As for railroads, there are about 150 miles open to the public. Some estates have, of course, small tracks for running sugar and bananas to different points for collecting.

Porto Plata is a pretty enough town, situated on land between open sea and harbor, but it looks cleaner than it is, and that goes in all those Dominican and Haitian towns. I think you can get information concerning naturalization and business laws by writing to Mr. Francisco J. Yánes, Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C., U. S. A.

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to Ask *Adventure* editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

Sport in Malaysia

THERE will be few, or no, more questions and answers from Mr. MacCreagh, owing to the fact that he has gone to South America on an expedition to collect drugs and moving pictures. The expedition will collect the drugs; Mr. MacCreagh will attend to the movies. See page 175.

Looks as if there'd be no more Ask *Adventure* letters, or fiction either for that matter, from him for the next two or three years. We hope to get some one to fill in on his section while he's gone, but can make no promises:

Question—"Am contemplating a trip west-westward; from here to 'Frisco, and then the plunge into the equatorial region.

The South Sea Islands and the East Indies have always had an irresistible appeal to that spirit of adventure lurking somewhere within me, and I have come to the decision to give entire freedom to this spirit and see what "the trail ahead" has in store for me.

The islands of the South Pacific appeal to me as the Mecca of deep-sea fishing—tuna, pala, swordfish and other game fish—while the islands of Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula seem to be the Paradise for the big-game hunter, according to the Enc. Britannica, having in its environs the royal Bengal tiger, the black panther, the leopard, varieties of jungle cat, the deer, bear, the wild boar, pheasants, partridges, duck and a profusion of other game.

In line with these arrangements I have decided to solicit your advice in regard to some important matters. Do you consider a .405 a large enough caliber for tiger-hunting, or would you suggest the British express rifle?

What clothing is requisite for this region?

Would a muskie rod and tarpon reel be an ideal combination?

What necessities in the medical line would you advise me to take along?

Have you any knowledge as to what a license would cost me in the Dutch possessions?

Is the English language the medium of expression—or the Dutch?

Do non-residents receive recognition in regard to working conditions in the Dutch and British possessions?

Would I derive any advantage through individual effort or would I be under obligation to the crown?

And lastly and the most important: What is your opinion of the outsider's status in this region?

What steamship line makes the run through the islands?

Quite a number of queries and answerable as you deem fit.

Am not quite a tyro at the game, as I have quite a lot of experience in the last few years—hunting, fishing, in camping and exploration trips.

Have been all through northern Ontario, Lake Nipissing and the southeastern end of Georgian Bay. Throughout the States of the West—Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, California, Texas and New Mexico.

Have also been down in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and Lower California; not as a tourist, but a "*Wanderluster*" seeking after adventure, and in love with the lure of the hinterlands. Love of life—for me—is found in the possession of pack, sleeping-bag, gun, rod, and dog; leaving the more formal enjoyments of life to the other fellow.

To me the tranquil solitude of the woods environment, with the call of the whippoorwill in the gathering evening dusk, or listening to the vesper song of the veery or of the wood-thrush gives me more encompassing enjoyment than any other pleasure in life, and I have decided to follow my instincts and go in search of that which is to my liking.

And between you and me, if there are any charges to this service just let me know and I'll be Johnny-on-the-spot."—J. H. G. B., Jr., West Homestead, Penna.

Answer, by Mr. MacCreagh:—Southern Pacific is not in my territory. Capt. A. E. Dingle or F. J. Halton, both Ask *Adventure* experts, will probably be able to tell you all you want to know.

Regarding Malay Islands.

.405 *caliber* is heavy enough for anything alive—if you have the right gun. But then if you can choose your gun I would not advise you to carry so much weight. Any of the modern rifles from 30-30 up will be quite heavy enough for any game you are ever likely to meet.

Don't worry about clothing here. Any half-way decent port that you jump off at will have all the necessary equipment suitable to just the region you are visiting; and it will cost less than it does here. Further, you won't have to pay customs duty.

The same applies to a medicine-kit.

The fishing-tackle you have will suit you perfectly out there.

English will take you all through Southern Asia, even in Sumatra and Java and Dutch Borneo.

As to deriving advantage through individual effort. Of course, any money you can make will be yours. They aren't pirates or politicians there.

Your position as an American citizen will be exactly the same as that of a British or a Dutch subject. You can go into business and own property without any more taxation than the law of the land exacts from its own residents.

In the British possessions you don't have to take out any license for shooting. All you have to do is register your weapons, so that the authorities can keep track of what becomes of them. The object of this is to prevent them from getting into the hands of natives. The same holds good in the Dutch possessions. Customs duty, however, is an item to be considered.

My advice is always: Unless you are particularly stuck on a particular gun, don't buy here. Wait till you get there; and you will find gunsmiths galore. Or better you will be able with a little looking round to pick up a used gun cheap. Somebody is always dying, and his gear is sold off at auction or among his acquaintances.

The British-India Steamship Co. and the Nederlandish Handels Maatschappig cover all the territory you are interested in. There are besides quite a number of small coasting-steamers which will drop you off wherever you ask the skipper to send a boat ashore.

I wish you fame as well as fortune. And may you come across each and every one of the interesting beasts which the "Enc. Britannica" tells you about.

The Ask *Adventure* service is free to everybody who is interested enough to write and enclose a stamped envelope.

Send questions direct to expert in charge—NOT to the magazine.

Riding and Roping

MR. CONNOR herewith supplements the information given by Mr. Harriman in the issue of last Mid-July. The subject is one of never-ending interest to *Adventure* readers:

Question:—"Could you kindly give me any information:

(1) On the art of riding and roping as practised by the cowboys, consisting of handling bad horses, fancy roping, tricks with the rope, such as twirling, etc.?

(2) Which is the best kind of rope to use?

(3) Could any information be obtained on fancy rawhide work such as the making of quirts, bridles, riatas, hackamores, etc.?

If this letter is published in your magazine please use only my initials."—H. F., Saskatchewan.

Answer, by Mr. Connor:—

(1) The art of riding and roping by cowboys comes after years and years of constant practise upon the range under all kinds of conditions. To learn to ride I would suggest that you place yourself under the instructions of some one who rides. It is impossible to teach it by correspondence. The same may be said of roping and rope-spinning.

I might give lengthy detailed instructions on mounting, preparing to mount, handling of the reins, and the use of the spur (which I do not advise except with certain animals) but it all would be merely so many words, and could not give you the proper "get-off" right. The picking up of a rope and the shaping of the loop and throwing at an animal or object can only be learned by seeing it done and much practise.

(2) The rope used is of various makes but of the same size—3/8 Bartlett for steering, roping and general range work. 3/8 Sampson Spot sash cord for rope-spinning and trick work. I always use Sampson when doing rope-spinning with the Pawnee Bill show, and like for range work the Bartlett rope. I have, however, used the "Pita" or "Maguey" 1/2-inch rope that is used south of the border in Mexico—when properly oiled and taken care of they are very satisfactory.

(3) Relative to fancy rawhide work I can not recall seeing anything written on the subject. Mexicans, as a rule, are very good at this art. But it is generally learned in prisons or other places of confinement. Sailors understand much of the sennit work of braiding as used in hackamores, riatas, hatbands—flat and round sennit and pointing, etc. Another subject which would require reams of paper to explain even the rudiments of.

LOST TRAILS

Note—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

WOULD like to hear from any of the fellows who were with me in Mexico with Troop D. 13th Cav. 1916-1917.— Address Ernest H. Clopper, 19 Lamb St., Cumberland Mills, Me.

FREDET, PETER. Died in the U. S. about thirty-one years ago. Any one who can give me any information as to where he died will receive a reward of five dollars.—Address Harry Cote, 472 Arlington St., Ottowa, Ont., Canada.

BARROW, JAMES S. Last heard of was getting his discharge from Army in Honolulu, T. H. 1919. Is about five feet nine inches tall, hair turning gray. Gray eyes. Age about thirty years. Any information will be appreciated by his sister.—Address Miss Elsie Barrow, Port Royal, S. C.

BARROW, OTIS W. Last heard of when about to be discharged from Army in Camp Lee, Va. in 1919. Last seen in 1914, was about five feet six inches tall, brown hair, steel-gray eyes. Age about twenty-three years. Any information will be appreciated by his sister.—Address Miss Elsie Barrow, Port Royal, S. C.

WILLIAMS, "KID". You "Old Siberian Wolf Hound" Write your old pal of Madawaska days.—Address Thomas W. Slater, 4314 San Jacinto St., Dallas, Texas.

SODERBERG, SERGEANT BOB. Swede. Blue eyes, light complexion, five feet eleven inches tall. Believed to be in U. S. Army. Last heard of in 1918 at Jefferson Barracks, Mo. Any information will be appreciated. —Address Sgt. Mark Plaisted, Supply Co. 50th Inf. American Forces in Germany.

RICE, HERBERT G. Last heard of in Camp Dix, N. J. March 10th 1920. And Duncan, Homer J. Color Sgt. 45th Inf. Please write to Clifford Kinneer 215 Elm St., Burlington, Iowa.

McDONALD, DUNCAN. Left Victoria, Australia, about twelve years ago. Last heard of at Fort Washington, U. S. A. Return or write. Mother dead.—Address S. Neville, Beaconsfield, Victoria, Australia.

JONES, MERLIN. Brother. Left home when sixteen years of age; about twenty-four years now. Light hair, blue eyes, medium build, large figure-eight scar on back of left hand, prominent front teeth, mellow voice. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated. —Address Mrs. Francois Baumgartner, 307 S. Neil St., Champaign, Ill.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

TAG, HOWARD J. H. Known in Arizona as The "Chew Gum Kid". About twenty years of age. Soldiered with him in the 32nd Inf, at San Diego, Cal., Camp Kearney, Cal. Have important news for him. Met both his sisters. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address Corporal G. E. Yaw, Co. A, First Gas Reg. Chemical Warfare, Edgewood Aerial, Edgewood, Md.

WHITEY, ADOLPH. Pugilist and an ex-soldier. With me in Philippines May, 1920. Last heard of in Frisco. Write about South American trip.—Address Thomas W. Slater, 4314 San Jacinto St., Dallas, Texas.

HITTER, PHIL. Last heard of in Germany with Army of Occupation. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—Myer Rubenstein, care of *Adventure.* .

HUGH, EDWARD. Uncle. Left Ryan, Del. Co., Iowa about twenty years about. Bought a ranch near Spokane, Washington. His son Arthur is twenty-seven years old. Any information will be appreciated.—Address Earl Hugh, 4136 24th St., San Francisco, Cal.

PINIANS, ROBERT O. When last heard of was a sailor on the U.S.S. *Cheyenne* at Galveston, Texas. Was to be discharged January, 1919, from the Navy. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address Bill Freitas, Coyote, Cal.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

SHULTZ, MRS. JULIA A. Age about forty-eight, height five feet two inches, weighs about 124 pounds, auburn hair. Was living in or near Mt. Oak, Nebr. Any information as to her whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address (Sister) Mrs. Hannah Neehause, 35 North Hamilton Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.

ALLEN, CHARLES K. Age thirty-two, dark hair and gray eyes. Last heard from July 26th, 1920, in Kentucky, when he left the Zeidman & Pollie Carnival Co. Any information will be greatly appreciated.—Address Mrs. Mary Allen, 502 7th Ave., Phoenix, Ala.

PIERCE. Motion picture actor. Last saw you at Jasper Studios, Hollywood, Cal., when we were playing "French Apaches" in Sydney Chaplin Comedy. Please send your address to Julian Close, 1059 Walnut St., Elmira, N. Y.

TEETS, EARL J. Please write your old friend.—Address Andrew McArthur, 63 Walnut Ave., Norwood, Mass.

KELLY, JOE. About sixteen years of age. Last heard of was mess-boy on the *Vernon County* bound for England. Write your old pal Curly, care of Seamen's Institute, Front and Queen Sts., Philadelphia, Pa.

ROBINSON, DAN. Anxious to communicate with you. Please write me to my old Boulevard address.—Harris.

NORTON, FRED. Brother. Would like to hear from you.—Address Anna Lenders.

SCHLEGEL, PHIL. Last heard of after leaving Navy at Pack's Camp No. 2, Texas. Wrote to you at Pack's Camp, but got no answer. Please write.—Address A. R. Glyde, Red Hook, N. Y.

BURNS, JIM. Brother. Left La Junta, Colo. about twelve years ago. Last heard of was in Arizona. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address Frank Burns, 627 Starr Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

DECKER, CHAS. Was at Emporium and Eldred, Pa. during Winter of 1918. Kindly communicate with your pal "Red," care of *Adventure.*

HODGES, GEORGE OTIS. Last heard of in Seven Persons, Alberta, 1917. Write and let me know where you are. Remember the "N. P." and "G.N."?—Address N. J. Pegg, 21 Rosemont Place, San Francisco, Cal.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

HOFFMAN, WILLIAM. Father. About fifty years of age. Last heard of in Texas about 1904. Thought to be a railroad man about that time, working for a Frisco System. Any information will be appreciated.—Address L. T. 414, care of *Adventure.*

UNCLAIMED mail is held by Adventure for the following persons, who may obtain it by sending us present address and proof of identity.

ALDRIDGE, F. P.; Allen, Paul; Beaton, G. M.; Mr. and Mrs. Bennet; Benson, E. N.; Bertsch, Miss Elizabeth; Blighton, Frank; Bonner, J. S.; Bromell, Mr.; Buckley, Ray; Campbell, Maurice Viele; Carpenter, Robert S.; Carr, John; Chisholm, D. F. K.; Clark, Ernest S.; Cleve, Jim; Clingham,. Charles; Coles, Bobby; Connor, A. M.; Cook, Eliot D.; Cook, William N.; Corbett, Fred P.; Crosby, Arthur F.; Curtis, D. A.; Courtlandt, Victor; Fisher, 1st Sgt. R.; Hale, Robert E.; Harris, Walter J.; Hoffman, J. M.; Howard, Charlie; Hughes, Frank E.; Hunt, Daniel O'Connell; Irving, Thos. L.; Jackson, Robert R.; Klug, Chas. C.; Kuckaby. William Francis; Kutcher, Sgt. Harry; Lafler, Mrs. Harry; Lancaster, C. E.; Lander, Harry; Larisey, Jack; Lee, Capt. Harry; Lee, Wm., R., M. D.; Lonely Jock; Lovett, Harold S.; McAdams, W. B.; MacDonald, Tony; MacKaye, D. C.; Mackintosh, D. T. A.; Mendelson, Aleck; Nelson, Frank Lovell; Nylander, Towne J.; O'Hara, Jack; Olmstead, Harry E.; Parker, Dr. M.; Parker, G. A.; Parrott, Pvt. D. C.; Phillips, Buffington; Phipps, Corbett C.; Pigeon, A. H.; Raines, Wm. L.; Rich, Wagoner Bob; Rogan, Chas. B.; Rundle, Merrill G.; St. Clair, Fred; Schmidt, G.; Scott, James F.; Smith, C. O.; Starr, Ted.; Soloway, Jack M.; Van Tyler, Chester; Von Gelucke, Byron; Ward, Frank B.; Wiley, Floyd; Williams, Capt. W. P.; J. C. H.; W. W. T.; S. 177284; L. T. 439; WS-XV.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at address given us do not reach you.—Address L. B. BARRETTO, care of *Adventure.*

THE following have been inquired for in either the First April or Mid-April issue of Adventure. They can get name of inquirer from this magazine:

BOWMAN, DANIEL; Broome, Oscar; Brown, Walter R.; Burks, John Sterling; Broks, Thomas Shafter; Bushnell, Lowman Chester; Clarke, Gilbert Van Antwerpt; Clarke, Jim; Clems, Thornton; Colton, James M.; Daveren, Jack; Donley, George D.; Eckert, Warren; Feeney, Frank, Catharine, Mary, Ellen, Margaret, Thomas and William; Gardiner, Ex. Pte. George; Goldstein, Samuel; Hoffman, John; Jack; King, Jim; La Pine, Andrew J.; Larson, Franklin S.; Linc; Lindgren, Mathias; Mack or Martin, Robert; McBain, C. Hutson; McKee, A. L.; Murrell, Butler E.; Nirgel, Cooper; Palmer, James; Pendland, A. C.; Phillips, Bryan; Reed, Forrest B.; Rethwisch, Pvt. Herman K.; Schulky, Fred; Sohn, Sollie; Speilman, Al; Stanfield, Ross; Stanley, Francis; Sullivan, Dave D.; Sullivan, Thomas; Sumsky, Herman; Thomas, Henry; Turbeville, Clem; Warner, George; Westman, Andrew August; Wilkinson, Charles.

MISCELLANEOUS—(Baldy) Jack Tettle, Frank Burns, Dave Scarbourgh, Burns Harney and Dick Horton, or any of the boys of Pack Train 308-9-10 or M. T. C. G. H.—Men and Officers of 2nd Canadian Construction Batt.; Men who served in late war at Halifax during time of explosion; Members of Co. B. 52nd Inf. Co. L. 321st Inf. 81st Div.—Co. G. and 7th Co. 1st Prov. D. Bn. 165th D. B.; Members of U. S. Monitor, *Tallahasse* or other vessel that called at Bermuda, 1915-1919.

MANUSCRIPTS UNCLAIMED

HASTLAR, GAL BREATH; Ruth Gilfillan; Jack P. Robinson; Miss Jimmie Banks; Lieutenant Wm. S. Hilles; Byron Chisholm; A. B. Paradis; E. E. S. Atkins; G. E. Hungerford; A. Gaylord; E. J. Moran; F. S. Emerson; E. Murphy; J. E. Warner; L. E. Patten; T. T. Bennett; Sinn Cardie; James Morse; R. W. Kinsey; C. H. Huntington; D. Polowe.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

MID-MAY ISSUE

In addition to the two complete novelettes mentioned on the contents page the following stories come to you in the next issue:

THE WINNING CHANCE — *Themson Burtis*
Daredevils of the air.

TILL THE WOLVES COME HOME — *Robert J. Horton*
Sheriff and killer meet in the blizzard.

TIPPECANOE AND COUGARS TWO — *W. C. Tuttle*
Nature-fakers with a movie machine stir up Piperock.

THE TORCH-BEARERS A Four-Part Story **Part II** — *Hugh Pendexter*
James Lance becomes an unwilling traitor.

MASHLUGI'S MUCKLUCKS — *Frank Richardson Pierce*
Big magic among the Eskimos.

THE PATH OF A KING Each story complete in itself — *John Buchan*

XIII The Last Stage
The path winds down to a rail-splitter's cabin—

XIV The End of the Road
—and up to high chambers that hold a nation's destiny.

SIR GALAHAD AND THE BADGER — *Gordon Young*
Guns flash in New York's underworld.

Kodak as you go.

Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N.Y., *The Kodak City*

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(2) putting together,
(3) and the finishing (by the matchless French method) of a perfect frock.

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